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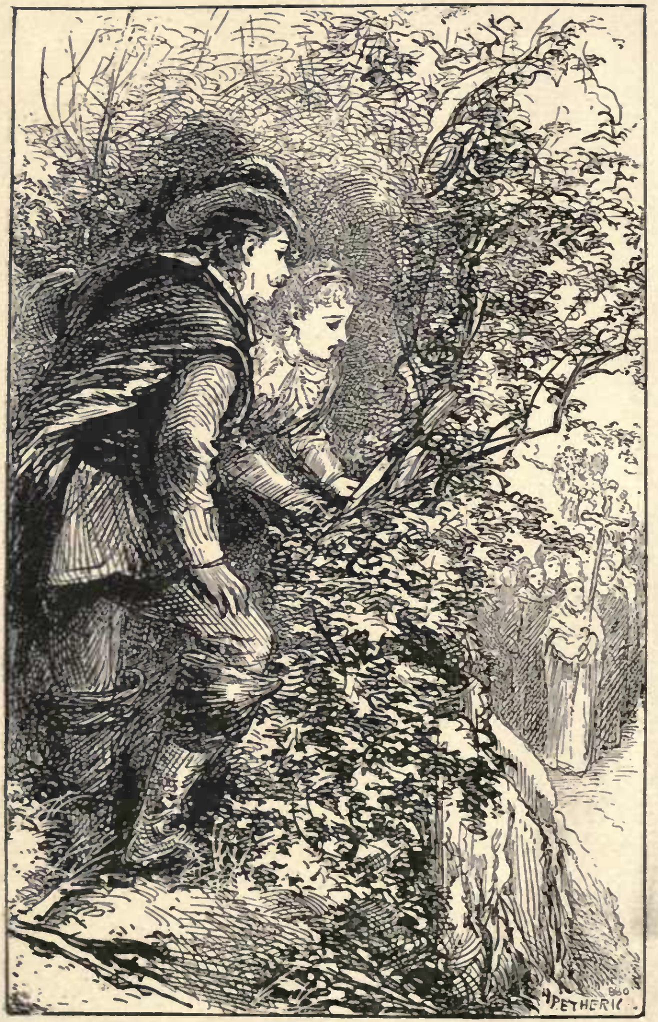

"We were soon safely hidden among the tall bushes, and wild vines, which covered the top of the rock, but not too soon, for we were hardly settled before the head of the procession appeared in sight."
PAGE 132.

THE CHEVALIER'S DAUGHTER.

THE

CHEVALIER'S DAUGHTER

BEING ONE OF THE

STANTON CORBET CHRONICLES

BY

LUCY ELLEN GUERNSEY

AUTHOR OF "LADY BETTY'S GOVERNESS," "LADY ROSAMOND'S BOOK," "WINIFRED" "THE LANGHAM REVELS," ETC.

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DEDICATION.

I began this book with the intention of inscribing it to my own and my mother's tried and faithful friend, Aaron Ericson Esq. *I now dedicate it to his revered memory.*

Lucy Ellen Guernsey.

2061850

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NOTE.

THESE memoirs were written by my respected grandmother when she was quite an old lady. I well remember as a child seeing her writing upon them, my grandfather sitting near, and she now and then suspending her pen to talk over some incident with him. Matters have not improved in France since her time, but 'tis said that the young dauphin is quite a different man from his father, and if he ever comes to the throne an effort will be made in behalf of toleration for the persecuted Protestants. I hope so, I am sure. But to return to the memoir.

After my grandparents' deaths, which took place within a week of each other, the papers were mislaid, and I only found them by accident in an inner cupboard of a curious old carved cabinet (I suspect the very one described in these pages), which my younger brother took a fancy to repair. I have amused the leisure afforded me by a tedious sprained ankle in arranging and transcribing these papers, which seem to me both interesting and profitable.

ROSAMOND GENEVIEVE CORBET.

***Tre Madoc Court, May* 1*st*, 1740.**

VEVETTE.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

I WAS born in the year of grace 1660, at the Tour D'Antin, a château not very far from the little village of Sartilly in Normandy. My father was the Chevalier D'Antin, a younger son of the Provençal family of De Fayrolles. My mother was an English lady, daughter of a very ancient Devonshire family. Her name was Margaret Corbet, and the branch of that tribe to which she belonged had settled in Cornwall. I remember her as a very beautiful woman, with crispy waved blonde hair and a clear white skin more like alabaster than marble, and no tinge of color in her cheeks. I never saw any other person so pale as she, though her lips were always red. She had beautiful gray eyes, with long black lashes, and clearly defined arched eyebrows meeting above her nose, which gave a very serious and even solemn expression to her face. This expression accorded well with her character, which was grave and thoughtful and very deeply religious. I never saw any person whose faith was so much like sight as hers. Nevertheless, she could smile very sweetly, and even laugh merrily at times, but not very often. For a shadow hung over our house from my earliest years—the same shadow which darkened so many other French families at that time.

My father was a pleasant, lively, kind-hearted gentleman, who worshipped his beautiful wife, and treated her as if she were indeed some fragile statue of alabaster which might be broken by rough usage.

He was, as I have said, a younger son. His elder brother lived far away in Provence—at least his grand château was there; but he and his wife spent most of their time at court, where they both held offices about the king and queen. By some family arrangement which I never understood, our own Tour d'Antin eame to my father, thus putting him in a much more comfortable position than that of most younger brothers, as there was a large and productive domain and certain houses at Granville which brought good rents. Besides, there were dues of fowls and so forth from the tenants and small farmers. Indeed, my father, with his simple country tastes, was far richer than his elder brother, and that though my father's purse was always open to the poor, especially those of our own household of faith.

The Tour d'Antin was a large building of reddish stone, partly fortress, partly château. I suspect it had some time been a convent also, for there was a paved court surrounded by a cloister, and a small Gothic chapel which was a good deal dilapidated, and never used in my time. The fortress part of the house was very old. It consisted of a square and a round tower, connected by a kind of gallery. The walls were immensely thick, and so covered with lichens and wall plants that one could hardly tell what they were made of. In the square tower my mother had her own private apartment, consisting of a parlor and an anteroom, and an oratory, or closet, as we should call it in England, the last being formed partly in the thickness of the wall, partly by a projecting turret. It seemed an odd choice, as the new part of the house was so light and cheerful, but there was a reason for this choice which I came to understand afterward. The rooms communicated by a gallery with the newer part of the house, where was a saloon, my father's special study and business room, and various lodging rooms. This same gallery, as I have said, led to the oldest part of the château—the round tower, which was somewhat ruinous, and where nobody lived but the bats and owls, and, if the servants were to be credited, the ghosts of a certain chevalier and his unhappy wife, about whom there was a terribly tragical legend. There was a steep stone staircase leading to the top of the round tower, from whence one could see a very little bit of the sea and the great monastery and fortress of St. Michael.

There was no view of the sea from any other part of the house, which lay in a sort of dell or depression quite sheltered from the winds, but from the hill behind us one could see the whole extent of the sands which lay between Granville and the Mont St. Michel, and the mount itself, a glorious vision in a clear bright day, and a gloomy sight when it lowered huge and dark through the mists of November. We young ones used to look at it with sensations of awe, for we knew that inside those high frowning walls, shut deep from light and air, were horrible dungeons, in which some of "the Religion" had perished in lingering misery, and others might, for all we knew, be pining there still. Formerly, we were told, the pinnacle of the fortress was crowned by a mighty gilded angel, an image of the patron saint of the place, but it did not exist in my day. The wide expanse of sand of which I have spoken was and is called the Grève, and was no less an object of terror to us than the fortress itself. It is a dreary and desolate plain, abounding in shifting and fathomless quicksands, which stretch on every hand and often change their places, so that the most experienced guide cannot be sure of safety. Not a year passes without many victims being swallowed up by the Grève, and these accidents are especially frequent about the time of the feast of St. Michael, on the 29th of September, when crowds of pilgrims flock to the mount from all over France. On the eve of All Souls' Day—that is, on the 2d of November—as all good Catholics in La Manche believe, there rises from the sands a thick mist, and this mist is made up of the souls of those unfortunates — pilgrims, fishermen, and smugglers—who have from time to time found a horrible and living grave in its treacherous depths, and who, having died without the sacraments, are in at least a questionable position.

To the south and south-east of the Tour d'Antin lay wide apple orchards, laden with fruit in good years, and seldom failing altogether in bad ones. There was also a small vineyard, but we made no wine, for Normandy is not a wine country. The very children in arms drink cider as English children drink milk, and it does not seem to hurt them. We had a garden for herbs and vegetables—mostly salads, carrots, and various kinds of pulse. Potatoes, which are growing very common in England now, and were cultivated to some extent even then, were unknown in France till long afterward, and are not in use at present except as a rare luxury. My mother had a flower-garden—very small, and carefully tended by her own hands. At the end of our garden stood a small unpretending stone building, not the least like a church, which was nevertheless the only place of worship of the Protestants for some miles around. For the domain D'Antin was a kind of Protestant colony in the midst of Catholics. All our own tenants were of "the Religion," and there were a few of the same way of thinking, both in Granville and Sartilly, who came to the "Temple," as it was called, on the rare occasions when we had a visit from a pastor. On such occasions we had sometimes as many as fifty worshippers. When I recall the aspect of that little congregation, with their solemn earnest faces, their blue eyes fixed on the preacher, the old men and women with their heads bent forward not to lose a word, the very children in arms hushed and silent, and then look round on our English congregation, with half the men asleep, the old clerk nodding in his desk, or droning out the Amens, as my naughty Walter says, like a dumbledore under a hat—when I contrast the two I sometimes wonder whether a little persecution would not be good for the church on this side of the water. It seems a poor way of praising the Lord for all his benefits to go to sleep over them.

As I have said, the domain D'Antin was a kind of Protestant colony in the midst of Roman Catholics—only we did not use the word Protestant at that time. We were among ourselves "the Reformed," or "the Religion;" among our enemies the "Heretics," "the religion pretended to be reformed," and so forth. Our family had belonged to this party ever since there had been any "Reformed" in France, and even before. For our ancestors had come into Provence from among the Vaudois, of whom it was and is the boast that they had never accepted the Romish corruptions of the true Gospel, and therefore needed no reformation. For some hundreds of years after their emigration these people had lived in peace with their neighbors. They had found Provence a wilderness, all but abandoned to the wolves. They made it a smiling garden. Vineyards and olive orchards, fruit and grain sprung up where they trod. They were considered as odd people, eccentric, perhaps a little mad, who would not swear nor drink to excess, nor sing indecent songs, nor frequent companies where such things were done ; but then they were quiet and peaceable, full of compassion for those who needed help, paying dues to State and Church without a murmur, and if they did not attend mass or confession, the quiet old parish curés winked with both eyes, for the most part, or contented themselves with mild admonitions to such as came in their way.

But in the year 1540 all this was changed, and a tempest fell on the peaceable inhabitants of Provence—a tempest as unexpected by most of them as a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. The preaching of the true Gospel, which was begun about the year 1521 by Farel and Le Fevre, spread like wildfire all over the kingdom. Crowds attended everywhere on the ministrations of the reformed preachers, and in many places the parish priests were left to say mass to the bare walls. It seemed at first as if France would soon break away from Rome, as Germany had done. But the fair dawn was soon overclouded. Persecution arose because of the word, and many were offended and returned to their former observances. The Vaudois settlers in Provence were the greatest sufferers. They were true to the faith of their forefathers, and no menaces could shake them. Two of their villages—Merindol and Cabrières—were burned to the ground. In the former only one person was left alive—a poor idiot who had given to a soldier two crowns for a ransom. The commander of the expedition, D'Oppide, gave the soldier two crowns from his own purse, and then caused the poor idiot to be bound to a tree and shot. The men of Cabrières being promised their lives and the lives of their families, laid down their arms, and were cut in pieces on the spot. Women and children were burned in their houses, others fled to the mountains and woods to perish of want and cold, and the name of Vaudois was almost extinguished in Provence.* Almost, but not altogether. A hidden seed still remained among the poor and lowly, and some great houses still openly professed their faith and protected their immediate dependants. Among these was the family to which my grandfather belonged. Through all the troubles and wars of the League—through the fearful days of St. Bartholomew, when France ran blood from one end to the other—the family of my ancestors kept their heads above the flood without ever denying their faith. It remained for my uncle, the head of our family, to sully our noble name by real or pretended conversion, in order to curry court favor from Louis XIV. He has left no descendant to perpetuate his shame. That branch of the family is extinct, the last son being killed in a disgraceful duel.

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* All these details and many more may be found in Felice's "Histoires des Protestants en France," and in many Catholic writers as well.

It was before this disgrace fell upon us that my father, in consequence of the family arrangement I have spoken of, took possession of the domain in Normandy. He was not a very young man when, in a visit he made to Jersey, he met and married my mother, who had also gone thither on a visit. We could see the island of Jersey on a clear day, like a blue cloud on the horizon, and used to look at it with great interest as a part of England, which we pictured to ourselves as a land of all sorts of marvels.

From the time of the execution of the Edict of Nantes in 1598 to the death of Henry IV., those of the Religion in France enjoyed a good degree of peace, and their temples (which they were not allowed even then to call churches) multiplied all over the land ; but the Bearnois, as the people loved to call him, was hardly cold in his grave before his successor began his attempts to undo what his great progenitor had done, and from that time to the final revocation of our great charter in 1685, every year —nay, almost every month—brought down new persecutions, new edicts on the heads of the "so-called Reformed." These edicts were such as touched the honor, the safety, the very life of every Protestant. I shall have to speak very largely of these edicts as I proceed, for some of them had a direct effect on my own destiny.

I have given a description of the Tour d'Antin as my birthplace, but in truth my earliest recollections are of a very different dwelling. For a long time after my birth my mother was in very delicate health and quite unable to nurse me herself, so I was given over to the care of a former servant of our family named Jeanne Sablot, who had lately lost a young infant. Jeanne took me home to her own house, and I only saw my dear mother at intervals of a month or two till I was ten years old. Jeanne had two children of her own, David and Lucille, both older than I, and my sworn friends and protectors on all occasions. Jeanne's parents had come from Provence, and she was like an Italian, both in looks and ways. Her husband, Simon Sablot, was a tall, blue-eyed, fair-haired Norman, somewhat heavy and slow both in mind and ways, a devout Christian man, respected even by his Roman Catholic neighbors for his just dealings and generous hand. But indeed we all lived in peace in those days. Catholics and Protestants were neighborly together in the exchange of good offices. Even the old curé did not hesitate to exchange a kindly greeting with one of his heretical parishioners, or to accept a seat and a drink of sparkling cider in his dwelling. The great wave of persecution which was sweeping over France had hardly reached our obscure harbor, though we began to hear its roar at a distance.

The old farm-house in which my foster-parents lived was roomy enough and very fairly neat, though the walls and beams were black as ebony, and varnished with the smoke of wood fires. I can see at this moment the row of polished brass pans shining like gold in the firelight, the tall drinking-glasses on the shelf, the oddly carved cabinet with bright steel hinges, which Jeanne called a "bahut," and cherished with pride because it had come down from her Vaudois ancestors, and the round brass jar used for milking, and into whose narrow neck it required some skill to direct the stream from the udder aright. I can see my foster-father seated in his great chair in the chimney corner, and my good nurse baking on the griddle cakes of sarrasin, which the English call buckwheat. These cakes were very good when they came hot and crisp from the griddle; but it was and is the custom to bake up a huge pile of them, enough sometimes to last several weeks, and it cannot be denied that toward the end one needed to be very hungry to relish them. We had corn bread also, for Simon cultivated one of the best of the small farms into which the domain was divided; but we ate it as a great treat, as English children eat plum-cake. We lived somewhat more luxuriously than most of our neighbors, for Jeanne had been cook at the great house like her mother before her, and Simon was wont to boast that his wife could dress him a dish of eggs in as many different ways as there are days in a month. Still we lived very plainly, and I fared like the rest. I learned to read from Jeanne, who was a good scholar and spoke very pure French, and she also taught me to sew, to spin, and to knit, for the Norman women are famous knitters. Besides these lessons, which were my tasks and strictly exacted, I learned to milk and churn, to make hay and plant beans, and, in short, to do all that Lucille did. We all had our daily tasks of Scripture to learn by heart, according to the admirable custom of the French reformers, and we also learned and sang Clement Marot's hymns and psalms. I have still in my possession an old French Bible with these psalms bound in the same volume. The index is curious: certain psalms are distinguished as "To be sung when the church is under affliction and oppression; when one is prevented from the exercise of worship; when one is forced to the combat; to be sung on the scaffold." Such are some of its divisions—very significant, certainly. On Sundays we learned the Catechism, and the "Noble Lesson" which had come to us from our Vaudois ancestors, read the stories in the Bible, and took quiet walks in the fields and lanes. Our Roman Catholic neighbors used to assemble after mass on the village green for dancing and other sports, but none of the Reformed were ever seen at these gatherings.

Once, when David was about fourteen, he ran away from home and went to Granville to see the great procession on the feast of St. Michael, which fell that year on a Sunday. Lucille did not know where he had gone, but I did, for he had told me his intention, and I had vainly tried to dissuade him. I did not mean to tell, but I was forced to do so. I shall never forget the horror of his mother nor the stern anger of his father.

"The boy is lost to us—lost forever!" I heard Jeanne say to her husband.

"No, no, ma bonne!" answered Simon soothingly; "the boy has done wrong, no doubt, but he will return—he will repent—all will be well."

"Ah, you do not know!" returned Jeanne in a shrill accent of horror. "There are monks at Granville—missionaries. He will be betrayed into some rash act of worship—a reverence to the image—an entry into the church. They will call it an act of catholicity—they will take him away—he will never return to us. Or if he should refuse them, they will accuse him of blaspheming the Virgin and St. Michael." Jeanne threw herself down in her seat and covered her eyes, and Simon's calm face was clouded with grave anxiety; but he spoke in the same reassuring tone.

"Little mother, you are borrowing trouble. Is not our Lord at Granville as well as here, and can he not take care of our son? I trust he will be betrayed into no rashness, though the idle curiosity of a child has taken him in the way of danger."

"But, Father Simon, will God take care of David now that he has been a naughty boy?" I ventured to ask.

Simon smiled.

"Ah, my little one, what would become of the best of us if God did not take better care of us than we do of ourselves. Nevertheless, to run into needless danger is a sin of presumption. There are dangers enough hanging over our heads, let us be as careful as we may."

I had lived, so to speak, in an atmosphere of danger all my life, but I think I now realized it for the first time.

"What do you mean by an act of catholicity?" I asked. "Is it anything wicked?"

Simon and his wife looked at each other, and then my foster-father put out his hand and drew me to his side.

"Listen to me, little Yvette!" said he, laying his hand on my head and turning my face toward his. "It is hard to sadden thy young life with such a shadow, but it is needful. Yes, the shadow of the cross, which God hath laid on his church, falls also on the little ones. Attend, my child! Thou must never, *never*," he repeated, with some sternness in his voice, "on any pretext, or on any persuasion, no matter from whom it comes, enter a church or bow thy head to any image, or kiss any image or picture, or make the sign of the cross, or sing any hymns so called, or canticle to the Virgin or the saints. If thou dost any such thing the priests will perhaps come and take thee away from thy parents to shut thee up in a convent, where thou wilt never more see one of thy friends, and from which thou wilt never escape with life except by renouncing thy God and thy religion!"

"I will never renounce my religion!" I cried with vehemence. "My uncle did so, and my father says he has disgraced his ancient name."

"Alas, poor man, if that were all!" said Simon. "But now wilt thou remember these things, my child?"

"I will try," said I humbly; for I remembered that only yesterday I had been humming the air of a hymn to the Virgin which had struck my fancy. "But oh, Father Simon, do you think they will take David away and shut him up in the monastery yonder?"

"I trust not," said Simon, and then he added, with vehemence, "I would rather he were sunk before my eyes in the deepest sands of the Grève."

"I think Vevette is as bad as David," said Lucie, who had not before spoken. "She knew he was going, and she did not prevent him. If *I* had known, I should have told mother directly."

"Yes, thou art only too ready to tell," replied her mother. "Take care that no one has to tell of thee."

"And remember that spiritual pride is as great a sin as disobedience, and goes before a fall as often, my Loulou," added her father.

"I did not know what to do," said I. "Mother Jeanne does not like to have us tell tales;" which was true.

"Thine was an error in judgment, my little one. I am not angry with you, my children. Another time you will both be wiser, and David also I trust. Now run up to the top of the hill and see if you can see him."

We went out together, but not hand in hand as usual. A drizzling rain was falling, but we were too hardy to mind that. Our sabots or wooden shoes were impervious to wet, and our thick homespun frocks almost as much so. No sooner were we out of hearing of the elders than Loulou overwhelmed me with a torrent of reproaches mingled with tears.

"It is you—you, Vevette, who have sent my brother away," she cried. "You knew he was going, and you did not try to stop him."

"That is not true," said I calmly—I was as angry as herself, but it was always a way of mine that the more excited I was the quieter I grew—"I said everything I could."

"Yes, you *said* everything; why did not you *do* something. If he had told me—but no! Everything is for Vevette, forsooth, because she is a demoiselle. His poor sister is nothing and nobody. You try every way to separate him from me, and make him despise me. I wish—" but a burst of angry sobs choked her voice.

"Yes, I know what you wish, and you shall have your wish," said I, for I was now at a white heat.

Loulou began to be scared, and, as usual, as I grew angry she began to cool down.

"Well, I think you ought to have told, but to be sure you are only a little girl," she added condescendingly. "As father says, when you are older you will know better."

This put the climax. Nobody likes to be called "only a little girl." I did not say a word, but I turned and walked away from her. I had had a glimpse of a figure coming up the hollow lane, and I was determined to meet David before his sister did.

"Vevette, where are you going?" called Loulou. "Come back; you will be wet through." I paid no attention to her, but, quickening my steps, I passed a turn in the lane, and as I did so David caught me in his arms.

"Vevette! what are you doing here, and what makes you so pale? Is your heart beating again?" For I was subject to palpitations which, though probably not dangerous, were alarming. "Here, sit down a moment. What frightened you?"

"*You*—you did," I gasped, as soon as I could speak. "I thought they would carry you off—that we should never see you again."

"Was that all? There was no danger," said David, with an odd little smile. "I did not go near them."

"Did not go near them!" repeated Lucille, who had now come up with us. "Why not?"

"I did not think it right," answered David manfully. "I meant to go when I set out, but Vevette's words kept ringing in my ears: 'It is mean and cowardly to pain thy mother's heart just for a pleasure.' So I turned aside and went to sit a while with Jean Laroche, who is laid up still with his sprained ankle."

"Then you never went near the procession at all —you never saw it," said Lucille, in a tone of disappointment, as David shook his head. "I thought you would at least have something to tell us. What are you laughing at, mademoiselle, if I may be so bold as to ask?"

"At you," I answered with perfect frankness. "At first you are enraged enough to kill me because I did not keep David from going, and now you are vexed at him because he did not go."

"But you did keep me, and I should have come home at once, only the poor Mother Laroche asked me so earnestly to come in and amuse Jean a little. But I must hurry home. Come, girls."

Lucille and I did not go into the house, but into the granary, which was one of our places of retirement. I took up an old psalm-book and began turning over the leaves. Lucille stood looking out of the door. At last she spoke.

"So you did hinder him, after all?"

"Yes, what a pity!" I answered mischievously. "Else he might have something to tell us. But I am only a little girl, you know. When I am older I shall know better. But there, we won't quarrel," I added. I could afford to be magnanimous, seeing how decidedly I had the best of it. "It is worse to be cross on Sunday than to go to see processions. Come, let us kiss and be friends."

Lucille yielded, but not very graciously. In fact, she was always rather jealous of me. She said I set her father and mother up against her, which certainly was not true, and that David liked me the best, which might have been the case, for she was always lecturing him and assuming airs of superiority, which irritated him, good-tempered as he was. I do not think she was very sorry when it was decided that I should leave the cottage and go home for good.

I have dwelt more lengthily on this childish affair because it was the first thing which made me at all sensible of the atmosphere of constant danger and persecution in which we lived even then.

CHAPTER II.

THE TOUR D'ANTIN.

THE very next day I was sent for to go and see my mother. Jeanne accompanied me, and had a long private conference, from which she returned bathed in tears. I anxiously asked the cause of her grief.

"The good Jeanne is grieved to part with thee, my little one," said my mother kindly. "Thy parents wish thee henceforth to live at home with them."

I did not know whether to be pleased or grieved at this news. I adored my beautiful pale mother, but it was with a kind of awful reverence—something, I suppose, like that a nun feels toward an image of the Virgin; but I had never learned to be at all free with her. Could I ever lay my head in her silken lap when it ached, as it often did, or could I prattle to her as freely of all my joys and sorrows as I did to Mother Jeanne? Other images also arose before my eyes—images of lessons and tasks and the awful dignity I should have to maintain when I was Mademoiselle Genevieve instead of only little Vevette. To offset these I had my room—a room all to myself—a bed with worked hangings, and a carved cabinet. Then there were lessons on the lute and in singing, which I had always wished for. On the whole, however, the grief predominated, and I burst into tears.

"Fie then!" said Jeanne, quite shocked at my want of breeding, though she had been sobbing herself a moment before. "Is it thus, mademoiselle, that you receive the condescension of madame your mother? What will she think of your bringing up?"

"Madame could think but ill of her child did she show no feeling at parting with her nurse," said my mother kindly. "But cheer up, my little daughter; I hope you will be happy here. We will often visit our good friend. Come, do not show to your father a face bathed in tears."

I wiped my eyes, kissed my mother's hand, which she held out to me, and managed to say, "Thank you, madame!" in a manner not quite unintelligible. Then Jeanne humbly preferred her request. Might I return to the farm for one day to partake of a farewell feast which she had it in mind to prepare? My mother smiled and consented, and I returned to the farm feeling that I had had a reprieve.

The feast was a grand affair, though the company was small, consisting only of our own family and Father Simon's father and mother—very old people who lived in a cottage down near the sea-shore.

Father Simon picked out his reddest apples and the finest clusters of raisins and nuts. Mother Jeanne made the most delicious galettes and cream soup thickened with chestnuts, and spread her whitest and finest cloth. The old people were the only persons of the company who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Old Sablot chirped like a cricket, and told old stories of the wars of the League and of Henry of Navarre, and his wife commended the soup and cakes, the eggs and custards, and imparted choice secrets in cookery to her daughter-in-law, who received them with all due deference, though she often said that no Norman woman ever learned to cook. But she was always a most dutiful daughter to the old people, and had quite won their hearts, though they had been somewhat opposed to Simon's marriage in the first place.

We children were very silent, as indeed became us in presence of our elders; and though we were helped to everything good on the table we had not much appetite, and stole out, as soon as we were dismissed by a nod from the mother, to hide ourselves in the granary. Here we had a playhouse and some dolls of our own making, though we—that is, Lucille and I—were rather ashamed of playing with them. David had also a work-bench with tools and a turning-lathe, which had been his grandfather's. The old man had given them to him on his last birthday, and David had learned to use them very cleverly. We did not speak for a moment or two, and then David observed, "How dusty it is here! To-morrow we must sweep out all the chips and shavings, and make the place tidy."

"To-morrow I shall not be here," said I sorrowfully.

"I suppose David and I can make the place neat for ourselves if you are not here," said Lucille, taking me up rather sharply.

"Lucille!" said her brother reproachfully; and then turning to me, "But you will come and see us very often."

"If I can," said I; "but I suppose I shall have a great many lessons to do now."

"Of course you will," said Lucille; "you will have to learn to play the lute and to write and work embroidery, and a hundred other things. You will be a great lady, and we cannot expect you to come and visit us. David ought to know better than to think of such a thing."

"Lucille, you are too bad to say such things!" I cried passionately; "to spoil our last day so. I believe you are glad I am going away."

"I am not either," she answered indignantly; "I am as sorry as David, only I don't want to be left out in the cold while you two pity and pet one another."

"Children, children!" said a voice which made us all start. We looked toward the door, and there stood the curé of the parish, Father François. He was old and fat, and somewhat too fond of eating and drinking; but he was a kind old man, and lived in peace with every one, Reformed or Romanist. "What then!" he was wont to say; "they are all my sheep, though some of them will persist in going astray. It is not for me to throw stones at them or set the dogs on them. Let me rather win them back by kindness."

"Children!" said he gravely, "are you quarrelling?"

"No, monsieur," answered David, taking off his hat to the priest, while Lucille and I drew together and clasped hands, forgetting our difference in fear of we knew not what. The old man observed the movement, and said, in a tone of some emotion,

"But what, my little girls; are you afraid of me?"

"No," answered David; "Monsieur has always been kind, but he must know—"

"I know, I know!" said the priest, as David paused; "but fear nothing from me. I shall not harm you. But, oh, my children, if you would but return to the bosom of our Holy Mother! Now, tell me, my son—just as a friend, you know—why will you not invoke the mediation of the blessed saints?"

"Because, monsieur, it is contrary to the Holy Scriptures," answered David respectfully.

"But the example of the holy saints of old, my son—the teachings of the earliest church—consider!"

"Monsieur," replied David, "as to the earliest teachings of the church, I suppose they are to be found in the Gospels, and I read there that when certain women would have brought their children to our dear Lord, the disciples, instead of interceding for them, forbade them."

"Oh, the Scriptures—always the Scriptures!" said the priest, pettishly enough.

"They are the words of God, monsieur!"

"True, my child, but you may see by their effects that they are not fit for every one to read. And yet I don't know how it is," he added musingly; "they certainly are the words of God, and meant to do people good, but no sooner do they begin to study than they become heretics."

The old curé ruminated a moment over this riddle, and then, apparently giving it up as hopeless, he took a large pinch of snuff and smiled benignly upon David.

"Ah, well, my son, I did not come to argue, but to ask a favor in the interest of charity. My poor sister, who is dying in a decline, as you know, has a fancy for some fresh eggs, and there are none to be had. But I know your mother has uncommon skill in the management of poultry, and I thought perhaps she might help me to one or two."

"That I am sure she will," said David. "If monsieur will walk into the house and sit down I am quite certain I can find two or three eggs quite new laid."

Father Simon looked surprised as the old priest entered, but made him courteously welcome, and Mother Jeanne directed Lucille to put up a jug of cream and a small jar of marmalade for the invalid. The curé thanked her, accepted a glass of cider, and offered his snuff-box to old Sablot.

"Tut, tut! don't be afraid, man," said he as the other hesitated. "That is not an act of catholicity, as they call it!" and he muttered something under his breath which did not sound like a blessing.

"Monsieur need not wonder that we are timid," remarked Father Simon.

"No, no, it is no wonder; and from all I hear I fear that times are not likely to be easier for you, my poor Sablot. Have you been to Sartilly of late?"

"No, monsieur, I have little to take me that way."

"It is as well. Take care if you do go. It is said there are wolves about, or likely to be; and you know that she-wolves carry off children at times. Many thanks to you, Jeanne," he added, rising and taking the little basket which my foster-mother had prepared; "my blessing be upon you! An old man's blessing can do no harm, you know. Farewell!"

He closed the door, and for a moment the party sat looking at each other in silence.

"What does he mean?" asked Jeanne at last.

"He means to give us a warning, the poor, kind old man," said Simon. "I doubt not he made his errand on purpose."

"Why did he not speak more plainly then?" said Jeanne in some impatience. "Of what use is such a warning as that?"

"I suppose he dared not. Remember, my Jeanne, in what a difficult place he stands. He has risked the displeasure of his superiors already by not giving information."

"But what can he mean by wolves on the road to Sartilly?" asked Jeanne.

"That we must find out, and meantime we must be doubly on our guard."

"They are all alike—all wolves alike!" said the old man, in his thin voice. "Some are in their own skin, some in sheep's clothing; some are like the loup-garou,* and speak with the voice of a man; and they are the worst of all."

"I do not think the curé looks much like a wolf," I ventured to say; for I had been rather taken with the old man's ways. "He is too fat. Wolves are always thin, and they howl and snarl."

"Ah, mademoiselle! but remember the loup-garou can take any form or any voice he pleases," said the old man.

"Is there really a loup-garou?" asked David; "I thought it was only an idle tale."

"An idle tale indeed! What is the world coming to? Did not my grandfather know one — a man who used to turn himself into a wolf and scour the country at night, followed by his pack, and devouring all in his way, but especially women and children. They caught him at last, and he was burned at Sartilly, protesting his innocence all the time."

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* What the Germans call the *wehr-wolf*, a creature compounded of brute and human.

"Perhaps he was innocent," said David.

"Thou shouldst not answer thy grandfather, David," said his mother mildly; "that is rude."

"No, no; he meant no harm," said the old man. "Let it pass. You women are always finding fault with a boy. But as to the loup-garou. However, we will tell no more tales to scare mademoiselle. It is well, at all events, to remember that the good Lord is above all. But it was good snuff the poor priest had."

I inwardly resolved that I would try to procure some snuff for the old man, and that I would bribe him with it to tell me more tales of the loup-garou, about which I was very curious. I knew there was no use in asking Mother Jeanne, for she never would tell me frightful stories. Indeed, the Reformed were not nearly as much under the influence of superstition as their neighbors of the other faith. To the last every corner had its goblins. In this dell the "Washers" were to be seen by the unwary night traveller, and he who acceded to their courteous request to assist them in wringing a garment had his own heart's blood wrung out, and became a pale spectre himself. If he escaped these ghostly laundresses, there were the dancers on the field above, who were equally dangerous, and another female demon who allured young men into lonely places and there murdered and devoured them. Our country neighbors here in Cornwall are bad enough, with their piskys, and fairies, and wish-hounds, and what not, but they are not so bad as the people in Normandy and Brittany.

That night Lucille and I slept together for the last time. Her jealousy was quite overcome for the time, and we promised that we would always be good friends, and built many castles in the air on the basis of that future friendship. She was a girl of strong character in some respects, and of great talents, but she had one fault which made her and those about her very uncomfortable at times, and which came near working her utter ruin. It is not likely that she will ever see these memoirs, but if she should do so she would not be hurt by them. The fires of affliction which she has passed through have burned up the dross of her character, and little is left but pure gold.

The next morning we went up to the château, and Jeanne took leave of me with many tears. Father Simon had prayed especially and earnestly for me at our morning devotions, and had solemnly given me his blessing. David had shaken hands with me, and then run away to hide his feelings. It was a sorrowful parting on both sides, and when I had a last sight of Jeanne turning at the bend of the path to wave her hand to me, I felt more like an exile in a strange land than a child coming home to its father's house. So I thought then, knowing nothing of an exile's woes.

"Now, my child," said my mother, coming into my little room, where I had shut myself up to weep, "let these tears be dried. They are natural, but even natural grief must not be indulged too far. Bathe these eyes and flushed cheeks, arrange your dress, and come to me in my room in half an hour."

My mother spoke gently and kindly, but with decision, and there was that about her which made her least word a law. Besides, I believe, to say the truth, I was rather tired of my grief, and quite willing to be consoled, and to indulge my curiosity as to my new home. So I bathed my eyes as I had been bidden, smoothed my hair, which never would stay under my cap properly, but was always twisting out in rebellious little curls, and began to examine my room.

It was an odd little nook, opening from my mother's, as is the custom in France for young ladies of good family. It occupied one of the corner turrets which flanked the square tower of which I have spoken. The walls were so thick and the inclosed space so small that I used to compare the room in my own mind to one of the caves hollowed in the rock by the persecuted Vaudois of which I had heard from Jeanne. The bed was small, with heavy damask hangings and an embroidered coverlet. There was no carpet on the floor, which was of some dark wood waxed to a dangerous smoothness; but a small rug was laid by the side of the bed and before the little toilette-table. The rest of the furniture consisted of a chair and stool, and a small table on which lay a Bible and two or three books in a language which I did not understand, but which I took to be English. In an ordinary French family there would have been a crucifix and a vase for holy water, and probably an image of the Virgin as well ; but it may well be guessed that no such furniture found a place in our household.

Small and plain as the room was, it seemed magnificent in my eyes, and I felt a great accession of dignity in being able to call this magnificent apartment my own. I looked out at the window—a very narrow one—and was delighted to find that it commanded a view of the high road and a very little tiny bit of sea, now at ebb and showing only as a shining line on the edge of the sands. In short, I had not half completed the survey of my new quarters before I was in the best of spirits, and when my mother called me I was able to meet her with a smiling face. I should have said that my room was elevated half a dozen steep steps above my mother's. Indeed, there were hardly two rooms in the house on a level with each other.

"Why, that is well," said my mother, kissing my cheek. "You are to be my companion and pupil now, little daughter, and I hope that we shall be very happy in each other's society."

She then made me sit down on a low seat beside her own chair, and examined me as to what I had learned. She heard me read, examined me in the Catechism, and asked me some questions on the

Gospels, to all of which I gave, I believe, satisfactory answers. She looked at my sewing and knitting, and praised the thread, both linen and wool, with which I had taken great pains.

"That is very good thread," said she; "but I must teach you to spin on the wheel, as they do in England. You shall learn English too, and then we can talk together, and there are many pleasant books to read in that language. You must learn to write also, and to embroider."

"Is English very hard, madame?" I ventured to ask.

"It is called so, but I hope to make it easy to you. By and by, when we have mastered the writing, we will have some lessons on the lute. But now we must consult Mistress Grace about your dress. Your father will like to see you habited like a little lady."

My mother blew the silver whistle which always lay beside her, and Mistress Grace entered from the anteroom. She was a tall, thin personage, English to the backbone. I never saw a plainer woman in my life, but there was that in her face which at once attracted confidence and regard. She was my mother's special attendant, and ruled the household as her vicegerent with great skill and firmness. The servants called her Mamselle Grace, or, more commonly, simply Mamselle, and treated her with great respect, though they sometimes laughed at her English French after her back was turned. I was taught to call her Mrs. Grace, in English fashion.

I was greatly in awe of her at first, but I soon learned to love her as well as Mother Jeanne herself.

Mrs. Grace greeted me with prim courtesy.

"We must take orders for some dresses for our young lady, Grace," said my mother, speaking French. "Will you see what we have for her?"

Mrs. Grace opened an armoire, from which she drew a quantity of stuffs and silks, and an animated conversation ensued. My mother kindly allowed me to choose what I liked best, and we were in the full tide of discussion when there was a knock at the door, and my father entered with a very disturbed face, which brightened as he met my mother's glance.

"Heyday, what have we here?" said he. "Has Mrs. Grace taken a new doll to dress?"

"This is our little one, Armand," said my mother; "I have taken her home, judging that it is time to complete her education, and also for a companion."

"That is well," said he. "Come hither, my little one, and see thy father."

I approached timidly, bent my knee, and kissed the hand he held out to me. He laid the other on my head and solemnly gave me his blessing. Then, holding me off and looking at me,

"Why, 'tis a true Corbet," said he; "the very image of thy mother, dearest Margeret." Then with a sudden change of tone, "I only wish she and thou were safe in the dear old mother's wing, the gray house at Tre Madoc."

My mother's pale cheek flushed a little. "Has anything new happened?" she asked.

"New? Yes! The vultures are gathering to the carcass, Margeret. We are to be left in peace no longer in our quiet corner. The old convent at Sartilly is opened once more with a band of nuns and a black Dominican for a confessor. They call it a hospital—we all know what that means nowadays."

My mother threw an arm round me as if to protect me, and I felt it tremble.

"Then that was what the curé meant," said I, struck with a sudden light. I was a quick child, and the danger which was always in the background sharpened the wits of all children of the Religion. "That was what he meant by the wolves!" And then, struck by the impropriety I had committed in speaking without being addressed, I faltered, "I beg your pardon, monsieur."

"There is no offence, my child; and you must not say monsieur, but my father," said he, sitting down and drawing me to him. "Tell me what was that about the curé and the wolves."

I repeated my story.

"You are a clear-headed little maiden," said he, "and have a quick wit. What did Simon Sablot think of the matter?"

"He said, monsieur—my father," I added, correcting myself, "that the good man meant to give us a warning, and had probably made his errand on purpose."

"More likely to spy out the nakedness of the land," muttered Grace, to whom all priests were alike.

"Nay, my Grace, do the poor man justice," said my father. "The Jesuits cannot make the whole nation over into tigers, not even the priests. The poor old man has grown up on our lands, as his father did before him, and I believe he feels kindly toward us. But I wish, oh I wish thou and the little one were in safety, my Marguerite."

My mother said some words in English which I did not understand, and then in French, "But what shall we do, Armand, to guard against this new danger?"

"We can only do as we have done in our family, but I fear we must abandon our Sunday gatherings for the present. The risk will be too great with such neighbors to spy upon us. But we will consult together. Run away now, my little one, and explore the house, only do not go into the upper rooms of the round tower. Some of the floors are dangerous. However, you may go to the battlements if you like. The stairs are safe enough."

"Only return at once when you hear the bell," said my mother. "To-day shall be a holiday for you; to-morrow we will begin our lessons. But first go with Grace and let her take your measure."

"Why is it so dangerous to have a hospital at Sartilly?" I ventured to ask Grace at a pause in her operations; "I thought a hospital was a place where poor sick people were taken care of."

"So it is in a Christian land, mademoiselle," answered Grace; "there are many such in England. But now and here a hospital means a place where young people of the Religion are shut up away from their parents and taught to worship images and say prayers to the Virgin and the saints—yes, pretty saints some of them," she added, in English. "There, I beg your pardon, mademoiselle. It is not good manners to speak in a foreign tongue before those who do not understand it."

"Madame says she will teach me English soon," I observed; "I shall like that if it is not too hard."

"Oh, it will not be hard to you; you are half an English woman," replied Grace.

"And will you tell me tales sometimes about England, and the place where my mother lived when she was a young lady? I shall like so much to hear them. I love to look at Jersey when we can see it, because it is a part of England."

Grace's heart was quite won by this request. She kissed me, and called me a pretty dear in her own tongue, which phrase, of course, I did not understand, only I saw that it meant something kind and friendly. Once released I ran all over the house, peeped into the great old kitchen, where I received many welcomes and blessings from the old servants, and ascended to the top of the round tower to gaze at the sea and at Mount St. Michael, now glowing in the autumn sunshine. True to the habits of implicit obedience in which I had been brought up, I did not even open the door which led into the upper floors of the tower, though I confess to a strong temptation to do so. I admired the salon hung with tapestry and adorned with carved furniture and various grim family pictures. I wondered what was in the cabinets, and studied the story of Judith worked in the hangings, and had not half finished my survey when the bell rang, and I hastened to my mother's room.

We dined in considerable state, being waited on by two men-servants, while Mistress Grace stood behind her lady's chair and directed their movements. The fare, though plain enough, was dainty compared to what I was accustomed to at the cottage, and I should have enjoyed my dinner only for a feeling of awkwardness, and a look in Mistress Grace's eyes as if she were longing to pounce upon me. I got pounced upon many a time after that, for great stress was laid upon table etiquette in those days. More than once I was sent away from the table in disgrace, not so much for mistakes I made as for fuming or pouting at having them corrected.

The next day my lessons began. I had my task of Scripture and the Catechism to learn, as at the cottage. Great stress was laid in the families of the Religion on this learning of the Scriptures, and with good reason, for we were liable at any time to be deprived of our Bibles, or indeed to be shut up where we could not have read if we had them; but that which was stored in our minds no one could take from us. I learned to write and began English, and, thanks to the pains and skill of my mother and the conversations I held with Mrs. Grace in our working hours, I soon learned to speak the language with considerable fluency, as well as to read in two or three English books which my mother possessed. I learned to spin on the little wheel which my mother had had sent her from England, and was greatly delighted when I was allowed to carry down to Mother Jeanne some skeins of thread of my own manufacture.

"But it is beautiful—no less," said Jeanne; "and done, you say, not with spindle and distaff, but with the little machine I have seen in madame's boudoir. See, Lucille, my child!"

"It is good thread, but I do not see that it is so much better than ours," said Lucille, somewhat slightingly. "And I do not see why one should take so much pains to learn to spin in this new fashion. The spindle and distaff are much better, I think, because they can be carried about with one. I can spin when I am going to the fountain for water or to the pasture for the cows. Vevette cannot do that with her grand wheel."

"That is true," said I, a little taken down; "but one can accomplish so much more. My mother can spin more with the wheel in an hour than one can do with the distaff in half a day, and I am sure the thread is more even."

"Ah, well, the method of my grandmother is good enough for me," said Lucille; "I am a Norman girl, and not an English lady." And she took up her distaff as she spoke, and began drawing out her flax with a care and attention which showed she was offended.

"Do you think, Memselle Vevette, that madame would condescend to let me look at this wheel of hers?" said David. "I should like so much to see it."

"Why, do you think you could make one like it?" I asked. "Oh, do, David! Make one for Lucille, and I will teach her to use it."

"Thank you!" said Lucille in a tone which did not bespeak much gratitude; "I have already said that Norman fashions are good enough for me." And then, softening her tone as she saw how mortified I was, "I dare say David would like to make a wheel, and if he succeeded you would have one of your own as well as madame."

I may as well say here that, after many efforts and failures, and by the help of his uncle, who was the blacksmith at Sartilly, David succeeded in constructing a very nice spinning-wheel, which he presented to me on my birthday. I wonder whether that wheel is still in use, or whether it has been thrown aside in some garret?

CHAPTER III.

YOUTHFUL DAYS.

I MUST now pass somewhat rapidly over four or five years of my life. These years were spent quietly at home with my dear father and mother at the Tour d'Antin. I was my mother's constant companion, and she instructed me herself in all that she thought it desirable for me to know, which was much more than was considered necessary for demoiselles in general. I learned to read and write both English and Italian, and I read many books in the former language which my mother had brought from home, or which had been sent to her from England since her marriage. These books would hardly have passed any French custom-house, for a very sharp lookout was kept at these places for heretical publications; but there were two or three vessels sailing from small ports on the coast, and commanded by persons of the Religion, by means of which, at rare intervals, my mother used to receive a package or letter from her friends in England.

Thus she become possessed of a copy of that most excellent book, "The Whole Duty of Man," which

I read till I knew it almost by heart; "The Practice of Piety," Mr. Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," and other excellent religious books of which that age, dissolute as it was, produced a great many. Sometimes my mother received other books and pamphlets, which she would not allow me even to look at, and many of which she burned with her own hands. These were plays and stories written by such authors as were in favor at the court of King Charles II.

The greatest disgrace I ever fell into with my parents came from stealing one of these books, and hiding myself away in the old tower to read it. It was a very witty play, and I was at first delighted with it, but my conscience soon made me aware that it was a wicked book; for, though of course I did not half understand it, I could see how profane it was, and how lightly and wickedly the most sacred name was used. My mother missed the book when she came to put away the contents of the package, and asked me whether I had seen it.

"No, maman," I answered; but I was not used to lying, and my face betrayed me. I was forced to confess and bring back the book. My mother's stern anger was all the more dreadful to me that she was usually so gentle. She would hear of no excuse or palliation.

"You have deceived me!" said she; "my daughter, whom I trusted, has lied to me. To gain a few moments of guilty pleasure she has disobeyed her mother, and shamefully lied to conceal her disobedience. I want no words. I must quiet my own spirit before I talk with you. Go to your own room, and remain till you have permission to leave it. Think what you have done, and ask pardon of Him whom you have offended, and who abhors a lie."

I did as I was bid, but in no humble spirit. On the contrary, my heart was full of wrath and rebellion. In my own mind I accused my mother of harsh unkindness in making, as I said to myself, such a fuss about such a little matter. Always inclined to be hard and stubborn under reproof, I was determined to justify myself in my own eyes. I said to myself that I was unjustly treated, that there was no such harm in reading a story-book, and so forth, and I set myself to remember all I possibly could of the play, and to form in my own mind an image of the gay world which it described. Oh, if I could only live in a great city—in London or Paris—instead of such a lonely old place as the Tour d'Antin! But by degrees my conscience made itself heard. I remembered how kind and good my mother had always been to me: how she had laid aside her own employments to amuse me that I might not feel the want of companions of my own age; in short, when my mother came to me at bedtime I was as penitent and humble as she could desire. She forgave me, and talked to me very kindly of my fault.

"Never, never, read a bad book, my child," she said. "You thereby do yourself an incalculable injury. We have not the power of *forgetting* anything. However deeply our impressions may be covered by others, they are still in existence, and likely to be revived at any time. No man can touch pitch and not be defiled, and no one can read and take pleasure in a bad book without being led into sin. You become like what your mind dwells upon. 'As a man thinketh, so is he.' Thus by thinking of and meditating upon the deeds of good men, and more especially those of our dear Lord, we are made like them, and are changed into the same image. This caution in reading is especially needful to you, my Yevette, as you are by nature facile and easily impressed."

"But, maman, why does my uncle send such books?" I ventured to ask.

My mother sighed.

"Your uncle, my love, does not think of such things as I do. He lives in the gay world of the court, where these things which your father and I consider all-important are but little regarded, or, if thought of at all, are considered as subjects for mockery."

"But, maman, I thought all English people were of the Religion. I thought they used the beautiful prayers in your prayer-book."

My mother sighed again.

"That is true, my child, but it is possible to hold the truth in unrighteousness. Here, where to be of the Religion is to put one's neck into the halter, there is no temptation to the careless and dissolute to join our numbers. Yet even here, under the very cross of persecution, the church is far from perfect. But we will talk more another time."

I was so penitent and so humbled in my own eyes that I made no objection when my mother deprived me of my two grand sources of amusement—the "Arcadia" of Sir Philip Sidney, and Mr. Edmund Spenser's "Fairy Queen"—telling me that she should not let me have them again for a month. I am somewhat inclined to doubt the wisdom of this measure. I know it threw me back upon myself for amusement in the hours when I was deprived of my mother's society, and left me more time to meditate, or rather, I should say, to dream of that gay fairy-land to which the volume of plays had introduced me. However, I had them back again at the end of a fortnight, and with them a new book—a great quarto volume of voyages and travels, with several historical pieces, collected by Mr. Hackluyt, formerly a preacher to Queen Elizabeth. This gave a new turn to my thoughts. I rejoiced in the destruction of the great Armada, and wept while I exulted over the glorious death of Sir Richard Greville, and travelled to the Indies and the New World and dreamed over their marvels. When I went, as I did now and then, to visit my old friends at the farm, I entertained David with these tales by the hour together, and even Lucille forgot her jealousy to listen. What castles in the air we built on the margins of those great rivers, and what colonies we planted in those unknown lands—colonies where those of the Religion were to find a peaceful refuge, and from which all the evils incident to humanity were to be excluded! They were harmless dreams at the least, and served to amuse us for many a long hour. I have seen some of these colonies since then, and have learned that wherever man goes his three great foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil—go also.

Our new neighbors at the hospital of St. Jacques—St. James indeed! I should like to hear what he would have said to them—gave us little trouble for some time. Indeed, they had troubles enough of their own. They were hardly settled in their new abode before a dreadful pestilential fever broke out among them, and several of the nuns died, while others were so reduced that there were not enough of well to tend the sick. The French country people have a great dread of infection, so that nobody would go near them; and I don't know but they would have starved only that my father himself on one or two occasions carried them provisions, wine, and comforts for the sick. There was great talk about the sickness, and those of the Religion did not hesitate to ascribe it to the pestiferous air of the cellars and vaults, which were known to be very extensive, and in which several persons had died after long confinement.

"It is the avenging ghost of poor Denise Amblot, who perished there with her infant," said old Marie, our cook.

"Not so, my Marie," answered my mother;

"Denise has long been in paradise, if indeed she did perish as reported, and is happily in better employments than avenging herself on these poor creatures. Yet it may well be that the bad air of the vaults so long used as prisons may have poisoned those living over them."

After the fever came a fire, which broke out mysteriously and consumed all the fuel and provisions which the nuns had laid up for winter; and, to crown all, a sort of reservoir or pond, supposed by some to be artificial, which supplied a stream running through the convent grounds, burst its barriers one night after a heavy storm of rain. The muddy torrent, bearing everything before it—trees, walls, and even the very rocks in its course—swept through the garden and washed away the soil itself, besides filling the church with mud and débris half way up to the roof. Whether the hand of man had anything to do with these disasters I do not know, but it is not impossible. At any rate, the two or three nuns who were left returned to Avranches, from whence they had come, and the place was again abandoned to the owls and other doleful creatures which haunt deserted buildings.

Meantime all over France the tide of persecution was rising and spreading, carrying ruin and devastation far and wide. There was no more any safety for those of the Religion. From all sides came the story of terror, of bereavement, of oppression, of flight. Every day brought new infringements of the edict, new encroachments on our rights and liberties.

The very sick and dying—nay, they more than any others—were objects of attack. Every physician was ordered, on pain of a heavy fine at the least, to give notice to the mayor and the priest of the parish whenever he was called upon to visit one of the Religion. Then the sick man was besieged with arguments, with threats, and horrible representations of the present and the future. If he yielded, which was seldom the case, his conversion was trumpeted as a triumph of the faith. If he persevered, as ninety-nine out of a hundred did, he was left to perish without help or medicine, and his dead body was cast out like a dog's in the next ditch. It was at the peril of life that a mother repeated to her dying child, or a child to its parent, a few comforting texts of Scripture or a hymn. The alms collected among the Reformed for the solace of their own poor were seized upon and used for the maintenance of the so-called hospitals, which were simply prisons where young people and women were shut up, and every effort made, both by threats and cajolery, to induce them "to return to the bosom of their tender and gentle mother the Church"—that was the favorite phrase. A few gave way and were set at liberty, but of these the most part sooner or later recanted their recantations, with bitter tears of penitence and shame.

But those mothers and fathers who knew that their dead were dead, and entered into the rest of their Lord, were happy in comparison with others, whose sons were in the galleys chained to the oar with the vilest of the vile, with felons and murderers, sleeping on their benches if at sea, driven by the lash like brute cattle to pestiferous dungeons if on land, and liable at any time to be condemned to perpetual imprisonment or shot down and cast to the waves. And even these had not the worst of it. There were hundreds of mothers who were entirely in the dark as to the fate of their daughters. The convents all over the land were filled with such girls, seduced from their homes on any or no pretext, and dragged away, never to be seen again. Whether they recanted and were made nuns, whether they remained firm and suffered life-long imprisonment and a horrible death, their fate was equally unknown to their friends. In some of the convents, no doubt, were conscientious women, who did their duty according to their lights, and were as kind to their prisoners as circumstances permitted; but there were others who sought to augment their treasure of good works and win heaven, as they say, by exercising every severity, and trampling upon any natural feelings of compassion which might arise in their breasts. Worse still, many convents were known to be schools of worldliness and vice, where the most dissolute manners prevailed. This was notably the case with the rich houses near Paris, where the superiors were often appointed by the king's mistress for the time being, and the convent was a resort for the gay young gentlemen of the court.

But it was upon the pastors that the vials of wrath were most lavishly poured out. Some, whose flocks were already scattered, escaped to foreign lands, but many remained behind to comfort their afflicted brethren. These were never for one moment in security. They journeyed from place to place in all sorts of disguises; they slept in dens and caves of the earth, or under the open sky; holding a midnight meeting here, comforting a dying person or a bereaved parent there; now celebrating the Lord's Supper, in some lonely grange or barn, to those of the faithful who had risked everything to break together the bread of life once more; now baptizing a babe, perhaps by the bedside of its dying mother, or uniting some loving and faithful pair of lovers who wished to meet the evils of life together.* Hunted down like wild beasts, they were condemned, if captured, to the gallows or the wheel, without even the pretence of a trial, after all temptations of pardons and rewards had failed to shake their faith. Now and then—very rarely—some one abjured; but, as I have said, these usually abjured their abjuration at the first opportunity, or died in agonies of remorse and despair.

As I have remarked before, our narrow corner of the world had hitherto got off easily, and we lived in comparative safety and in friendship with our neighbors. But the time was coming, and close at hand, when the storm was to reach alike the lofty aerie and the lowly nest. My mother, I believe, would have been glad to emigrate at once. She thought with longings inexpressible of her quiet English home in the valley of Tre Madoc, of the old red-stone house overhung with trees, where dwelt peace and quietness, with none to molest or make afraid; of the little gray church on the moor, with its tall tower, which served as a beacon to the wandering sailor, where the pure word of God was preached, and the old people and little children came every Sunday.

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* See any collection of Huguenot memoirs.

My mother always loved the English Church. She kept her prayer-book by her, and used to read it every day. She taught me many precious lessons out of it, so that when I was twelve years old I knew it almost by heart. This love of hers for the English Church was in some degree shared by my father, and, as I heard afterward, was a reason for his being looked coldly upon by some of the Religion, to whom the very name of bishop was an abomination; and no wonder, since with them it was another name for oppressor and persecutor. But they found, when the trial came, that the Chevalier d'Antin and his gentle lady were as ready to put all to hazard for their faith as the best of them.

As I have said, my mother was desirous of emigrating, as so many others had done. But my father would not consent to forsake his poor tenants and peasants, many of whom had come with him from Provence. He thought himself in some sort their shepherd, and responsible for their welfare. This was a very different estimation from that in which some of our neighbors held their people. There were three or four large estates about Avranches and St. Lo, the owners of which lived in Paris the year round, or followed the court in its movements, and left their lands and people to the care of agents, taking no thought for them except to extract from them as much money as possible. But such was not my father's idea. He held that every large landowner was a steward under God, responsible for the welfare of those placed under his charge, and that he had no right to use his estate merely for his own enriching or aggrandizement. One who did so he held for an unfaithful servant, who would be called to a strict account whenever his Lord should return, and who could expect nothing else for his reward than outer darkness and gnashing of teeth. I have seen something of great landowners since that day, and I fear this idea of duty is very far from common among them. Certainly I have never known one, unless it is my husband, who fulfilled it as my father did. He was not always dictating or patronizing. He did not regard his tenants and workpeople either as little children or as dumb beasts, but as rational, accountable creatures. Of course he met with plenty of hindrance and opposition. The Norman is a slow thinker, and very conservative. That "our fathers did so" is reason enough for them to do so also, and they are as full of prejudice and superstition as any people in France, except perhaps their neighbors of Brittany. But they are good honest folk, sober for the most part, except on some special occasions, very industrious, and extremely domestic and frugal in their habits. Their houses are generally comfortable, according to French ideas, and they often have a great deal of wealth laid by in the shape of fine linen, gold ornaments, and furniture. Oh, how I should like to see the inside of a Norman farm-house once more! Those very cakes of sarrasin, which I used to hate, would taste like ambrosia. But I am wandering again, in the fashion of old people.

My father, holding these ideas, did not feel at liberty to seek safety himself and leave his poor people as sheep without a shepherd. He would gladly have sent my mother and myself to a place of safety, but my mother would not hear of leaving him, nor did they see their way clear to part with me. So we remained together till I was fourteen years old. My mother instructed me in all sorts of womanly accomplishments, and from Mrs. Grace I learned to do wonderful feats of needlework, especially in darning, cut work, and satin-stitch, which in my turn I taught to Lucille, with my mother's full approbation, for she said I learned in teaching, and besides, in these days of flight and exile it behoved every one to practise those arts by which they might earn their bread in a strange land. These lessons were sometimes very pleasant to both of us; at others they were disturbed by that spirit of jealousy which had always been Lucille's bane, and which, as she did not strive to conquer it, increased upon her. She was always vexed that I should do anything which she could not, and if she could not almost directly equal or excel the pattern I set before her she would abandon the work in disgust, sometimes with expressions of contempt, sometimes with an outburst of temper which made me fairly afraid of her for the time. But we always made up our quarrels again, for she was really anxious to learn, and besides that I think she truly loved me at that time. Poor Lucille! David I seldom saw. He had gone, with the full approbation of his father and mine, to learn the trade of a ship-carpenter at Dieppe, where he soon distinguished himself by his skill. His holidays, which were few and far between, he always spent at home, and he never came without bringing presents to his family, and some little product of his skill and ingenuity—a reel, a little casket inlaid with ivory or precious woods, or a small frame for my embroidery. I have one or two of these things still.

My own temptations did not lie toward jealousy, which was one reason perhaps that I had so much patience with Lucille; for I have observed that people usually have the least toleration for the faults most resembling their own. I was always, from my earliest years, a dreamy, imaginative child. I heard but little of the world—that gay world in which my uncle and aunt lived at court. But now and then I got a peep at it through the medium of the plays and tales which my other uncle would persist in sending—for I am sorry to say that I had more than once repeated the offence of stealing and studying some of these books—and this same gay world had great charms for me. I had been less with my mother than usual for some months, for she and my father had many private consultations from which I was excluded. I used to take my work to the top of the old tower or out in the orchard, and while my fingers were busy with my stocking or my pattern my fancy was making me a grand demoiselle, and leading me to balls and gardens and all the scenes of the English court. Of the English court, I say, for my wildest dreams at that time never led me to the court of Louis XIV. That was too closely associated with the dangers and inconveniences of our condition for me to think of it with anything but horror. Thus I spent many hours worse than unprofitably. Then my conscience would be aroused by some Bible reading with my mother or some tale of suffering heroism from my father, and I would cast aside my dreams and return to those religious duties which at other times were utterly distasteful to me. In short, I was double-minded, and as such was unstable in all my ways.

CHAPTER IV.

TRUST AND DISTRUST.

"YOU are to have a holiday to-day, Mrs. Vevette," was Grace's announcement to me one fine morning somewhere toward the end of September. "Your mother has one of her bad headaches."

"Oh, how sorry I am!" I exclaimed, thinking not of the holiday but of the headache. "Is it very bad, Mrs. Grace?"

"Very bad indeed," returned the lady-in-waiting, solemnly shaking her head; "I have seldom seen her worse. I have been up with her half the night. You must be very quiet, my dear, and not rush up and down stairs, or drop your books, or—"

"May I go up to the farm and see Mother Jeanne?" I asked, breaking in upon the catalogue of what Grace called my "headlong ways;" "I want to teach Lucille that new lace-stitch, and I dare say Jeanne won't mind if I do make a little noise," I added, with some resentment. Not, of course, that I wished to disturb my mother, or indeed any one else, but I was a little tired of this same catalogue, which had been rehearsed so many times.

"There you go again, breaking right into the middle of a sentence," said Grace. "What would your mother say?"

"Perhaps she would say, 'Don't be always lecturing the child, Grace,'" said I mischievously, quoting some words I had overheard from my mother. Then, as I saw by her rising color that she was really angry, I threw my arms round her and hugged her.

"There, don't be vexed, Gracy dear; you know I would not disturb maman for the world. But I do really want to go to the farm very much to teach Lucille the lace-stitch you showed me yesterday, and to see the new kittens."

"Kittens! what kittens?" said Grace, who was a dear lover of pussies of all sorts.

"Why, the new kittens. Don't you remember the beautiful young cats that David brought to his mother the last time he came home? One of them has kittens, and Mother Jeanne says I may have my choice of them."

"Oh, yes; go by all means, my dear; and I hope you will have a pleasant day. Only be sure you are at home before dark, and mind you don't wait till it is time you were here before you set out. And as to the kitlings, if there should be a tortoise-shell or a dark brindle, I would choose that, especially if it have a white face. Such cats are always good-tempered and good mousers."

"I believe these cats are all white," said I; "the mother is as white as snow."

Grace's face was shadowed a little.

"I don't know about that," said she doubtfully. "In Cornwall we think that white cats bring ill-luck. My poor sister had a beautiful white cat come to her, and that very night she broke her china jug, and the next day her husband fell from the tall pear-tree and was lamed for life."

"But these are not like common cats, you know," said I, suppressing a laugh which I knew would mortally offend Grace and perhaps lose me my holiday. "They are outlandish cats, with long hair and bushy tails. I should think that would be different."

"Perhaps so; but I would think about it a little. However, I will come down and see them myself."

I tiptoed through my mother's room into my own little cell, collected my working things into the pretty foreign basket which David had brought me the last time he came home, and then, kissing my mother's pale cheek, I descended the stairs softly, and did not give a single skip till I was beyond the precincts of the tower.

"How full of notions Grace is," I said to myself. "I wonder if all the Cornish people are like that."* (N.B. If a hare had run across my own path, or I had heard a crow on my left hand, I dare say I should have turned back from my expedition.) "But I mean to have the kitten in spite of her. As though I would give up a beautiful long-haired white cat for such a fancy as that!"

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* They are, even to this day.—L. S.

I did not hasten on my way, for it was early, and I found my walk so pleasant that I had no desire to shorten it. The bramble-berries and filberts that were ripening by the sides of the lane had great attractions for me. There were late autumn flowers to gather, and lizards to watch as they ran to and fro on the walls or sunned their gilded sides on a broad flat stone, vanishing like a shadow when one drew near. A great wind had blown the day before and thrown down many apples from the trees that overhung the lane. I filled my pocket with some ripe golden pippins, and walked on eating one till I drew near the place where the highway to Avranches, such as it was, crossed our lane. This was a favorite resting-place, since it commanded a glorious view of sea and shore and the great fortress-monastery. There was a kind of crag or projecting rock some thirty feet high, round which the road wound, and which, while it presented a perpendicular face to the highway, was easily ascended by an active person from the side of the lane.

"I wonder whether they are gathering the vraic," I said to myself. "I should think a great quantity must have come ashore after the wind last night. I mean to climb up and see." *

I climbed lightly up the rude rocky steps, but

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* The vraic or varech is the seaweed, which is very abundant on this coast, and much esteemed for manure. It is regularly harvested in spring and autumn, but may be gathered at any time.

started as I came upon Lucille, who was sitting upon the dry moss which covered like a soft carpet the top of the rock. She was wrapped closely in her long black cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head, somewhat to the detriment of her clean starched cap. Her unfailing companion, the distaff, was in her girdle, but the spindle lay idle beside her, though she seemed to have cleared a flat place especially for it to dance upon. Her hands were folded over her knee, and her eyes were fixed upon the high road, which from this elevated point could be traced all the way to Avranches. I saw in a moment that she was in one of her moods, but I was in too high spirits with my walk and my holiday to mind that; and as she did not seem to hear my approach I put my two hands over her eyes, saying, in the words of our child's game, "Guess whose fingers are all these."

"Vevette, how you startled me!" she exclaimed, rather angrily; and then, recovering herself, "How did you come here?"

"On my feet, since I have no wings," I answered, sitting down beside her on the dry moss. "Maman gave me a whole holiday because she has a headache, and I thought I would come down and teach you my new lace stitches. It is well I took a fancy to climb up here, or I should have missed you. But now, tell me how came *you* here?"

"Because I have a holiday as well as yourself," answered Lucille, in a tone which had no pleasure in it. "Aunt Dénise has come up from Granville to see my mother, and maman said I might have a play-day too, and go to see Marie Lebrun if I liked. But I don't care about going. I know they only sent me away because they have secrets to talk about which they don't want me to hear."

"Well, why need you mind?" I asked. "Maman often says to me, 'Run away, petite, I wish to say something to Grace,' and I never mind it a bit. Of course grown people have things to talk about which they don't want children to hear. Why should you care?"

"But I do care," said Lucille, and her eyes filled with tears. "I am not a child like you. I am three years older, and I do think they might trust me."

"It is not that they do not trust you, silly one," I returned, a little out of patience with the mood I could not comprehend. "As I tell you, there are things to be talked about by grown people which girls do not understand and ought not to know. Mrs. Grace has told me that a dozen times. What is the use of minding? We don't understand, and there is the end. Some time we shall, I suppose."

Lucille did not answer. She fixed her eyes once more on the highway, and I let mine wander off over the sands and the shore where people, looking like little black ants, were busily collecting the precious seaweed, to Mount St. Michael, whose turrets shone brightly in the sun.

"I wish I had wings," said I at last. "How I should like to fly over the sands and alight on the top of the mount yonder, where the great gilded angel used to stand looking over land and seas. I wonder whether he got tired of his perch and flew away some night."

"You should not speak so of the holy angels. It is not right," said Lucille gravely.

"I was not speaking of the angel, but of his image," said I; "that is quite another thing. Then I would spread my wings and travel over to the islands yonder, and then to England, where my uncles live."

"And get shot for a strange water-fowl," said Lucille, apparently diverted for the moment, and laughing at my fancy. "Then you would be stuffed and set up to be gazed at for sixpence a head, and that would be more tiresome than sitting at your embroidery."

"Yes, I don't think I should like it at all. Let me take the distaff, Lucille. I have not spun any thread in a long time. What beautiful fine flax!"

"Yes, it is some that my aunt brought me. She got it of a ship-captain who came from foreign parts. Take care you don't break my thread."

We chatted on indifferent subjects a while, and Lucille seemed to have recovered her good-humor, when I inadvertently disturbed it again.

"Martin said he met your father coming from Avranches yesterday. What took him so far from home?"

"I don't know; they never tell me anything," answered Lucille, her face clouding.

"There might be a very good reason for his not telling you," I remarked in a low tone. "If his journey was about the Religion it might be a great deal better for you to be able to say you did not know. And I dare say it was, for my father has been away a great deal of late."

"Oh, the Religion—always the Religion!" said Lucille between her teeth; "I hate the very name of the Religion."

"Lucille, how dare you?" I gasped, rather than spoke. I was too shocked to say more.

"Well, I do," she returned vehemently. "It spoils everything. It separates families and neighbors, shuts us up just to our own little selves, and cuts us off from everything that is pleasant. Jennette Maury can go to the Sunday fêtes and the dances on feast days under the great chestnut, but I must stay at home and read a musty book, because I am of the Religion. Other people live in peace, and nobody interferes with them. We live with a sword hung over our heads, and our daily path is like that over the Grève yonder—likely to swallow us up any time. And what do we gain by it in this world, I should like to know?"

"What should we lose in the next world if we deserted it?" I asked, finding my voice at last.

"I am not talking of deserting it. I am no Judas, though they seem to think I am by the way they treat me—never telling me anything. But I don't see why we should not have kept to the ways of our fathers, and saved all this trouble."

"We do keep to the faith of our fathers," said I, repeating the proud boast of the Vandois, which I had long ago learned by heart. "Our church never was corrupted by Rome, and did not need reforming. But, Lucille, what would your father and mother say to such words?"

"I should never say such words to them," answered Lucille, "and I am foolish to say them to you. I suppose, however, you will go and repeat them to every one, and let the world say how much better and more religious is the heiress of the Tour d'Antin than poor Lucille Sablot."

"Lucille, you know better," I answered indignantly; "but I see you don't want anything of me, so I shall go home again, as you say Mother Jeanne is busy." And gathering up my basket and laying down the distaff in Lucille's lap, I rose to depart, though I trembled so much with excitement and indignation that I could hardly stand. Lucille looked at me in surprise, for in our ordinary quarrels I grew cool as she grew angry, and *vice versâ*.

"Don't go, Yevette. I ought not to have spoken so. I did not half mean it, but I am so very, very unhappy." As she spoke she hid her face and burst into a flood of tears and sobs. I sat down again, knowing from experience that when she recovered from her crying fit her bad mood would be gone for that day. So it proved. After sobbing a long time she wiped her eyes and made a great effort to compose herself.

"I am sorry I was so cross," said she; "but I am so unhappy. There is so much that I cannot understand. Why should you be the heiress of D'Antin and I only a poor farmer's daughter? Why should you learn music and English and dress in silk, while I wear homespun and tend sheep, and come and go at everybody's call? Why should our enemies triumph and eat us up like bread, and live in all sorts of luxury, while we are poor and trodden down like the mire in the streets, and our Master never put forth a hand to help us? We give up everything for him, and he lets us be beaten on every side, and gives us nothing but promises—promises for another world, from which nobody has come back to tell us anything. No, I don't understand it."

Lucille spoke with a fire and passion compared to which her former vehemence was nothing. I had never thought of these things—never dreamed of questioning anything that was taught me. Indeed, I believe I had been too full of dreams to *think* at all. I was stricken dumb before her at first, but as she gazed at me with her dark eyes like sombre flames, I felt I must say something, so I gave the only answer that occurred to me—the only one indeed that I have ever found.

"It is the will of God, Lucille, and he must know best."

Lucille muttered something which I did not quite hear.

"And besides, he does help us," I added, gathering courage. "Just think how all the martyrs have been helped to stand firm, and what joys they have felt even at the galleys and in dark dungeons, where they had hardly room to breathe."

"I know they say so," said Lucille; "but tell me, Yevette, have *you* experienced any of these wonderful joys. Because I know *I* never did."

I did not know exactly what to answer to this question. In fact, in those days my conscience was in that uneasy state in which it always must be with any half-hearted person. No, I could not say that my religion was any comfort to me, and I hastened to change the conversation.

"Anyhow, Lucille, I don't think you would be any happier if we were to change places. You would be lectured and ordered about, and sent out of the way a great deal more than you are now, and you would not have nearly as much time to yourself. I believe, after all, it is more in being contented than anything else. Look at Gran'mère Luchon. She has as little as any one I know—living down by the shore in that dark smoky little hut with her two little grandchildren, and supporting them and herself with her net-making and mending and her spinning. And yet she is happy. She is always singing over her work, and I never heard her make a complaint."

"She is not there any more," said Lucille. "The new curé ordered her to go to mass, and because she would not he has taken the children away and handed them over to the nuns, and nobody knows what, has become of the old woman."

"The wretches!" I exclaimed.

"Hush!" said Lucille; "don't speak so loud; nobody knows who may be listening. I *hate* living so—in such constraint and danger all the time. It is odious."

"Don't let us talk about it any more," said I. "I have some news for you. My cousin, Andrew Corbet, from England, is coming to visit us. Will it not seem odd to have a cousin?"

"Not to me," said Lucille, making an effort to throw off her moodiness. "I have a plenty of them, you know. When do you expect him?"

"Next week, perhaps; the time is not set."

"What is he like?"

"I don't know; I have never seen him. He is about twenty years old, and has been educated at a great college in England, so I suppose he is like other young gentlemen. Come, let us eat some of Mrs. Grace's cakes and bonbons, and then I will show you my new stitch. Grace gave me a nice basket, because she said we might like to make a little feast under the trees."

Lucille had something too—a bottle of milk and some wheaten bread which she had set out to carry to Gran'mère Luchon, when she heard of the misfortune which had befallen the poor woman. We grew quite merry over our little feast, and the lesson in needlework went on prosperously afterward.

"You have caught it beautifully," said I; "Mrs. Grace would say that you excelled your pattern. But what are you looking at?" For

Lucille had droped her work and was gazing intently in the direction of Avranches. I turned my eyes the same way and beheld a procession coming up the road—of what sort I could not at first discover. There was a cross-bearer and two or three banners ; then a sight dreaded by every Huguenot child in France—the Host carried under a fine canopy—and then came a dozen or so of donkeys, each led by a man and bearing a woman dressed in black, with a white scapular and long black veil. "They are the nuns coming to take possession of the hospital," said Lucille. "It has been all repaired and fitted up anew, and they are to have a school and teach lace-making and embroidery."

"Lucille, what do you mean ?" I exclaimed ; for she had risen and stepped to the edge of the rock to have a better view. "They will see you. Come down here behind the bushes till they are past."

Lucille obeyed rather unwillingly, as I thought. We peeped through the bushes as the procession advanced, and had a good view of the nuns. There were ten of them, riding with eyes cast down and hands folded in their large sleeves. One or two of them were very pretty, and all had a ladylike look. Last came the two little grandchildren of poor Mère Luchon. The youngest, a mere baby, was sucking a lump of gingerbread, apparently quite content ; but the sobs and tear-stained face of the other told a different story. She was seven years old, and was already a great help and comfort to the old woman. As she passed she raised her streaming eyes as if imploring pity. My blood boiled at the sight, and if I could have commanded the lightning from heaven, that procession would have gone no farther. It was closed by a number of villagers, all telling their beads, some with a great show of devotion, others languidly and carelessly enough. The new curé came last of all. He was a small, thin, sharp-faced man, with a cruel mouth, and eyes that seemed to see everything at once. He was certainly a great contrast to poor Father Jean, who used to go about with his deep pockets filled with bonbons, which he distributed to Catholic and Protestant children alike.

"The wretches! the murderous brigands!" said I between my teeth. "Oh, if I could kill them all! The vile kidnappers! Oh, why does the Lord suffer such things?"

"That is what I ask," said Lucille; "why should they be so prospered and have so much power if the Lord is not on their side? As to these children, I don't know that I pity them so very much. The old woman could not have lived long, and now they are sure of support and a good education. I think the nuns are very kind-looking ladies, for my part. And if they were right after all—if one's salvation does depend upon being a Roman Catholic—then they are right in forcing people to become so."

"Why did not our Lord and his apostles force all the Jews to become Christians?" I demanded hotly enough. "He said he had only to ask to receive more than twelve legions of angels. Why did not he do it, and shut up all those people who did not believe on him, or put them to death, if that is the right way?"

"He said his kingdom was not of this world, else would his servants fight," answered Lucille.

"Then the kingdom which is of this world, and whose servants do fight and oppress, is not his," I answered, for I could reason well enough when I was roused from my day-dreams.

"We ought to be going," said Lucille, abruptly changing the subject. "The supper will be ready, and my father will be angry if I am not there. I am to be kept to rules as if I were no more than five years old."

Jeanne welcomed me with her usual affection, but her eyes were red with weeping, and she was evidently absent-minded. I told her what we had seen.

"Yes, I have had the story from my sister," said Jeanne, her eyes overflowing as she spoke. "The poor old woman! happily it cannot be long in the course of nature before she goes to her rest; but my heart aches for the little ones. My children, you must be doubly careful. This new priest is not like the old one—he will leave us no peace. You must take care never even to go near the church, or stop to look on at any of their doings. Perhaps a way of escape may be opened to us before long. It would indeed be hard to leave our home and go among strangers, but exile with liberty of worship would be better than living in such constant fear."

"Put thy trust in God, my Jeanne," said Father Simon. "We are all in his hands. We must remember that the church has never been promised anything in this world but tribulation and the cross. The crown is to come hereafter. Now let us think of something else. Mamselle Vevette, will you come and help to gather the apples on your own tree? They are quite ready, and I will carry them up for you when you go home."

I had been grave quite as long as I liked, and was very ready to enjoy the apple-picking from my own particular tree of golden Jeannetons, which had been solemnly planted when I was born, and now hung loaded with fruit. Never were such apples as those, I am sure. I wonder whether the tree is still in bearing? It must be old and moss-grown by this time, if it has not been cut down. Jeanne made us a supper of fresh pan-cakes, galette, fruit, and rich cream cheese, and when I went home Father Simon shouldered his *hotte* * and carried a famous load of beautiful apples up to the tower.

I found my mother much better, and able to welcome me, and to hear all I had to tell her. I hesitated about repeating my conversation with Lucille on the rock, but my mind had been so disturbed that at last I though best to do so, hoping to have my doubts laid at rest.

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* A kind of deep, roomy basket, made to be carried on the shoulders.

"You gave the right answer, my little one," said my mother when I had finished. "It is the will of God. Remember that he has never promised his children temporal prosperity. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' are his own words. Yet he does give his children many pleasures. There are beautiful flowers and fair fruits growing even by the side of the strait and narrow way, but we must not go out of the way to seek them. Neither must we be discouraged when the path leads over rocks and thorns, or even through marshes and quicksands; but remember that our dear Lord has trodden every step before us, and is waiting to receive us at the end."

Much more she said, in the same wise and gentle strain, and at last sent me to bed feeling somewhat comforted. The night was warm, and my door was left ajar for air. I had hardly fallen asleep, as it seemed to me, when I was waked by voices, and heard my mother say,

"I do not like what she says about Lucille. I fear the girl has been tampered with. Perhaps we should warn her parents."

"We will think about that," said my father. "Ah, my Marguerite, if you and the little one were but in safety—"

"Do not ask me to leave you, Armand—not yet," said my mother, clasping her hands. "If we could but send the child home to my sister I should be at ease. Could we not do it, when Andrew comes?"

"We will consider of it," answered my father. "And now, my Pearl, let us betake ourselves to prayer."

The murmured sound of the prayer sent me to sleep, and I heard no more, but I turned Lucille's words over in my mind with a vague uneasiness many times during the next few days. I was destined to remember them for long afterward.

The next day was made memorable by an unlucky accident. Mrs. Grace was standing in the door of my room (which I have said was raised several steps), lecturing me in her usual prim fashion concerning certain untidinesses which she had discovered about my toilette-table, when, suddenly stepping backward, she fell down the stairs, bruising herself and spraining her ankle very badly. We dared not send for a surgeon. There was an old man at Avranches who was very skilful, and with whom we had always been on good terms, though he was a Roman Catholic; but he had lately taken a young assistant (or rather had been given one, for we all believed the young man had been placed as a spy over the old one), and should it be known that we had a sick person in the house we were in danger of being invaded by the priests, striving to force or coax the sick person into a recantation. Happily my father had a pretty good practical knowledge of surgery, and both my mother and Mrs. Grace herself were strong in the virtues and uses of herbs and simples. Mrs. Grace was presently put to bed and her ankle bandaged. She was in great pain, but the pain was little or nothing compared to the worry of helplessness, housekeeping cares, and the necessity of being waited upon instead of waiting upon others. Truth to say, she was but a troublesome charge. My dear mother, who had borne this same cross of helplessness for many a year, preached patience in her gentle way. Mrs. Grace assented to all she said, called herself a miserable, rebellious sinner, and the next minute fretted more than ever: over that careless Marie, who would be sure to burn the marmalade, or that stupid coward of a Julienne, who would not venture up to the top of the tower to bring in the drying fruit lest she should see the white chevalier. For after a long season of absence—for what ghostly purpose, who should say? —the white chevalier had again been seen walking on the battlements of the round tower, or passing the window of his wretched and guilty wife's apartment.

"Do not trouble yourself about the marmalade, my poor Grace," said my mother, with a somewhat woeful smile. "Who knows whether we shall be alive to eat it, or whether all our stores may not fall into the hands of our enemies?"

"I should like to spice the marmalade for them!" exclaimed Grace, quite overcome by the idea of her dainties being devoured by the Papistics, as she always called them.

"And as to the tower," continued my mother, "I think myself the maids may as well keep away from it. If the white chevalier and his wife should really have been seen, it is just as well not to run any risks."

"But whom then will you trust?" asked Grace, with a startled look.

My mother put to her lips a fresh rose she had brought in her hand, and glanced at me, and Grace said no more. I was not annoyed, as Lucille would have been, for I had become accustomed to such hints; and with a passing wonder as to whether my mother really believed in the white chevalier, I plunged into my dear "Arcadia," and forgot all earthly cares in the somewhat long-winded trials of the virtuous Parthenia. But I was destined to hear more of the matter.

That very evening, about an hour before sunset, my father asked me to walk with him. This was a great honor, for in my youth children were by no means so familiar with their parents as they are now. Whether the change be for the better or no depends upon the parents a good deal. We walked out by the lane, across a field, and through the loaded orchard bending with golden and ruddy fruit, some of which was already gathered for the cider-mill. The low sun shone under the branches, and turned the heaps of apples to heaps of gold and rubies. It was very still, but the tide was high, and came in over the distant sands with a hollow roar, which my father said portended a storm. He spoke little till we reached a little heathy eminence crowned with one of the monuments of ancient date so common in Normandy and Brittany. From this point we had a view for a long distance around, and nobody could come near us without being observed. My father sat down on one of the fallen stones, and motioned me to sit beside him.

"My daughter," said he, taking my hand in his with a certain solemnity, "you are now almost a woman, and old enough to be admitted into the knowledge of your father's secrets. But such knowledge is full of danger. Are you brave, my child? Are you a worthy descendant of those valiant Provençal and Vaudois women who hazarded their lives for the faith? Consider, my Yvette! Suppose you were required to go into the upper floor of the old tower, even to the ladies' bower, at night; would you be afraid to do it? Consider, and give me an answer."

All my better self rose up at this appeal. I considered a moment, and then answered firmly,

"I might be afraid, but I would do it, if it were my duty."

"There spoke a true Corbet woman!" said my father, smiling kindly on me and pressing the hand which he held. "'MY DUTY!' Let that be your motto, as it is that of your mother's house, and you will not go far wrong. Now listen while I impart to you a weighty secret. But let us first make sure that there are no eavesdroppers."

My father raised himself from the fallen stone and looked all around, but no one was in sight, and the sparse heath and short grass could not hide anything so large as a child of a year old. He even parted the brambles and wild vines and looked inside the monument (which was one of those made of three upright stones with a slab laid over the top), but found nothing worse than a pair of young owls and their mother, which were terribly disconcerted by his scrutiny, and hissed and snapped valiantly. Meantime I waited with anxious curiosity, though I had a guess of what was coming.

"I have certain intelligence," said he, speaking in a low voice, "that one of our best and oldest pastors, Monsieur Bertheau, who has, at the risk of his life, visited and comforted many of our afflicted brethren in Charenton and elsewhere, is now flying from his enemies, and will arrive at this place some time to-night. He must be lodged in the old tower till the period of spring tides, when I shall hope to procure a passage for him to Jersey, or to England itself. Grace, who has usually taken charge of such fugitives, is now disabled. I must be away this night, and your mother is unable to do what is needful; besides that, her absence from her room might excite suspicion. Mathew grows old and forgetful, and I dare not trust any of the other servants. Dare you, my daughter, undertake to meet this venerable man in the ruins of the chapel to-night, and lead him by the secret passage to the room at the top of the tower, which has been prepared for him?"

"Yes, my father," I answered; "but how shall I know the way?"

"I will give you directions which will lead you to the entrance of the passage. Turn to your right after that, and you cannot miss your way. When the good man is in safety you can come directly to your mother's room by another passage, which I will also indicate to you. But, my child, I must not conceal from you that there is danger in this trust. Should you be discovered by any of our enemies in giving help to this good old man, your life or your liberty must be the forfeit."

"I know it, my father," I answered; "but if it is my duty, I can do it. Besides, there is danger anyhow."

"That is true, my child. He that saveth his life is as like to lose it as he that layeth it down for the Lord's sake and the Gospels."

Then my father broke down, clasped me in his arms, and wept over me in the way that is so terrible to see in a strong man.

"My child, my Marguerite's only child! my treasure! and must I lay down thy young life also? Oh, Lord, how long, how long!"

Presently, however, he composed himself, and laying his hand on my head he most solemnly dedicated me to God and his service, as the most precious thing he had to give. That dedication has never ceased to affect my life, even when I have strayed the farthest.

We returned home slowly, after my father had given me the most minute directions for finding the secret passage, and I had repeated them after him so as to imprint them on my memory, for I dared not write down even the least hint of them lest the paper should fall into the hands of our enemies. I told my father that I would look into the chapel, and be sure that I understood what he had said.

"No one will think anything of it," I added. "I am always wandering about the place, and I often go to the chapel and sit in the old stalls."

"Very well, child. I trust thy discretion. Only come in before it is dark, lest the poor mother *should* be needlessly alarmed. And one thing more, my Vevette: let not a hint escape thee to the Sablots; not that I would not trust the father and mother with any secret, but I confess I mistrust Lucille after what you have told us about her."

"You don't think she would betray us?" I asked, startled.

"I cannot tell. If she has indeed been tampered with she may not be able to help herself. At all events, the fewer people are in a secret the better."

When we returned to the tower I slipped away and entered the old chapel. It was of considerable extent—quite a church, in fact, though I suppose no service had been said there for perhaps a hundred years. The altar of wonderfully carved oak was still in its place, though all its ornaments and images had been removed or destroyed. The altar-piece which was painted on the wall still remained, and though faded and stained was still beautiful.

My father once told me that it had been painted by some great Spanish artist. The Virgin and her Babe were the central figures. She had a sad, grieved expression in her dark eyes, and I had a fancy that she was mourning over the use that had been made of her name. Certainly I think that gentle, lowly woman could hardly be happy in heaven itself if she knew how she was treated here on earth.

The chancel was surrounded by a row of carved niches or stalls with seats in them. I counted them from the left-hand side of the altar, and putting my hand under the seat of the fourth I found and slightly pressed the button my father had told me of. It moved in my fingers, but I dared not open it.

"I suppose it was by this secret way that they brought the wife of the white chevalier when they buried her alive in the vault below," I thought, and then, as a sound behind me made me turn with a thrill, I almost expected to see the poor murdered lady's ghost arise before me. But it was only one of our numerous family of cats which had chosen this place for her young progeny. If I had seen the ghost, however, I do not believe I should have blanched: I was too highly wrought up by enthusiasm and the kind of nervous excitement which has always served me in place of courage. I ascended the rickety stairs into the music loft, touched the yellow keys of the useless organ, and leaning over the ledge tried to think how the place must have looked when it was full of kneeling worshippers. Then, being warned by the deepening shadows of the lateness of the hour, I went into the house to my supper.

CHAPTER V.

GUESTS AT THE TOUR.

I SAT in my mother's room that night till it was nearly twelve o'clock, and then, wrapping myself in the long black cloak which is, or was, worn by women of every rank in Normandy, I stole down-stairs and across the courtyard to the ruined chapel. All was lonely and deserted. The servants had gone to bed hours before; the horses were safe in their stables, and I encountered nobody and nothing but our great English mastiff, Hal, who sniffed at me a little doubtfully at the first, and then stalked solemnly at my side, carrying in his mouth a stick he had picked up—a ceremony which for some unknown reason he always performed when he wished to do honor to any one. I was not sorry to have his company, for the place was lonesome enough, and I had never in my life been out of doors so late. The moon, several days past the full, had risen, but was still low in the sky, and only gave light enough to perplex me with mysterious reflections and shadows, which seemed to have no right reason for their existence. Owls whooped dolefully, answering each other from side to side. The sea roared at a distance, and now and then a sudden gust, which did not seem to belong to any wind that was blowing, shook the ivy and sighed through the ruined arches. And there were other sounds about as I entered the dark chapel—deep sighs, hollow murmurings and whisperings, sudden rushes as of water—no one knew from whence. My father always said that these sounds came from the wind sighing in the deep vaults below the chapel, and perhaps from some subterran passage which the sea had mined for itself at high tides; but the servants considered them as altogether supernatural, and nothing would make them approach the chapel after nightfall.

I believe I have said there was a door opening from the chapel through the outer wall, but I had never seen it opened in my time. By this door I now took my stand, Hal sitting in solemn wonder at my side, and listened in awful silence, holding in my hand the great key dripping with oil. It seemed an age to me, though I do not think that more than half an hour passed before I heard a slight noise, and then three low taps thrice repeated on the outside of the door. Hal roused up, growling like a lion, but my upraised finger silenced him. Quickly, and with a firmness of hand which surprised me, I opened the door and saw, not the old man I expected, but a peasant in Norman dress. For a moment my heart stood still, and then I was reassured.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower!" said the stranger.

"To them that fear him," I added, giving the countersign. "Come in quickly; we must lose no time."

He entered, and I closed the door. Then dismissing old Hal, who was very unwilling to leave me in such dubious company, I led the way to the chancel, by means of the little dark-lantern which I had held under my cloak. I pressed the button with all my strength; the whole of the stall moved aside, and showed a narrow passage in the thickness of the wall.

"Enter, monsieur," said I; and then, giving him the lantern to hold, I pulled back the stall and heard the bolt drop into its place. Then taking the light again and holding it low to the ground, I went on, and the stranger followed. The road was rough, and he stumbled more than once, but still we proceeded till we reached a very narrow and broken stair, which led steeply upward till at last we came to a heavy wooden door. This I pushed open, and found myself in a somewhat spacious room with some remains of mouldering furniture and hangings. Here had been placed a small bed, a chair, and some food, and on the hearth were the means of lighting a little fire.

"Now we are in safety, monsieur, and can speak a little," said I, with an odd feeling of protection and patronage mingled with the veneration with which I regarded my companion. "Please sit down and rest while I light a fire. We can have one at any time, for this chimney communicates with my father's workshop, where he keeps a fire at all hours."

I busied myself with lighting the fire, and had started a cheerful blaze when I heard a deep sigh behind me, and looking round I was just in time to break the fall of the stranger as he sank on the floor. I was dreadfully frightened, but I did not lose my presence of mind. I loosened his doublet, moistened his forehead and lips with strong waters, and when he began to revive, and not before, I put a spoonful of wine into his mouth, remembering what Grace had said to me once, "Never try to make an unconscious person swallow. You run the risk of choking him. When he begins to recover he will swallow by instinct."

At last, when I had begun to think that I must call my mother at all hazards, the stranger opened his eyes and regarded me with fixed and solemn gaze.

"Is it thou, my Angelique?" he murmured. "Hast thou at last come to call thy father away?"

"Please take some more wine," said I, speaking as steadily as I could, but my voice and hand both trembled. The stranger sighed again, and then seemed to come wholly to himself.

"I see I was bewildered," said he; "I took this demoiselle for my own daughter, who has been in heaven this many a year."

"I am the Demoiselle D'Antin," said I. "My father was obliged to go away, and Mrs. Grace is ill, so he sent me to guide you to a place of safety." And then I brought the soup which I had warmed on the hearth, and pouring out wine I begged him to eat and drink.

"And did your father and mother indeed send their only child on so dangerous an errand?" asked the old man. "Sure, now we shall know that they fear God indeed, since they have not withheld their only child from him."

"Please do eat, sir," I urged; "the soup will be cold."

The old man smiled benignly. "Yes, my child, I shall do justice to thy good cheer, never fear. I have neither eaten nor drank for twenty-four hours. But now seek thine own rest, little one. Late hours are not for such as thou."

"I will come hither again to-morrow," said I, when I had arranged the bed to my liking; "but my father bid me say he would not be able to see you before midnight. If any one comes who knows the secret, he will give three knocks, counting ten between. If any one else comes, take refuge in the secret passage, and follow it past the place of entrance till you come to stairs that lead downward to the chapel vaults. These you can descend; but do not walk about, as the ground is uneven, and there are deep rifts in the rocky bottom of the vault. I will leave you the lantern, as the moon shines in on the staircase, and I know the steps well. Good-night, monsieur."

The minister laid his hand on my head and gave me his blessing, and I retreated to my mother's room, which I reached by another long passage in the walls of the gallery. Now that the excitement was over I was ready to drop with fatigue and sleepiness, and most thankful I was to be dosed with the hot broth my mother had kept ready for me, and deposited in my own little bed. Oh, how horribly sleepy I was when I was awaked the next morning. But I knew I ought to be stirring as early as usual to avoid suspicion, and I was soon up and dressed. How many things I did that day! I ran to wait upon Grace and my mother; I mounted to the top of the old tower to gather the wall pellitory for some medicinal purpose or other, and to spread out the fruit which Grace always laid there to dry; and finally I ran down to the great spring below the orchard to bring up a jug of water which Grace's fevered fancy had thought would taste better than any other.

I was coming up the hill with my jug on my head in Norman fashion, and singing,

"Ba-ba-balancez vous donc!"

when I met Lucille. She had been crying, and was very pale.

"What is the matter, Lucille?" said I.

"The matter is that I will not endure any more to be so treated," said she passionately. "To be scolded like a child because I stayed out a little after sunset talking to Pierre Le Febre, and to be told that I disturb the peace of the family. No, I will not endure it !"

"But, Lucille, why should you talk with Pierre Le Febre ?" I asked. "You know what a wild young fellow he is, and what bad things he has done. I don't wonder your mother does not like it. Oh, Lucille, surely you do not care for him !"

"Of course I do not care for him," said Lucille, more angrily still. "I do not care a rush for him. It is the being lectured and put down and never daring to breathe that I hate."

"I am sure you have as much liberty as I do," said I ; "and as to lectures, I should like to have you hear how Mrs. Grace preaches at me. Besides, I think Mother Jeanne was rightly displeased. I am sure no girl who values her character ought to be seen with Pierre Le Febre. Remember poor Isabeau, Lucille."

"What, you, too !" said Lucille between her closed lips. "Must you, too, take to lecturing me ? Ah, well, we shall see !"

We had now reached the point I mentioned before, where the lane crossed the high road to Avranches, and our attention was attracted by the sound of chanting. The priest and his attendants were coming up from the village, evidently carrying the Host to some dying person.

"Quick, Lucille, there is yet time !" said I, and I turned aside into the thick bushes and ascended the rock I had spoken of. I had reached the top and hidden myself from observation before I discovered that she was not following me. I peeped over and saw her standing just where I had left her.

"Quick, quick, Lucille!" I cried, but she never moved. The procession came near. To my inexpressible horror I saw Lucille drop on her knees and remain in that position till the priest came up. He stopped, asked a question or two, and then, as it seemed, bestowing his blessing and giving her something from his pocket, he passed on. It was not till he was out of sight that I dared descend. I found Lucille still standing, apparently lost in thought, and holding in her hand a little gilded crucifix.

"What have you done, Lucille?" I cried. "You have made an act of catholicity!"

"I know it," said she, in that hard, unfeeling tone which is sometimes a sign of the greatest excitement. "I meant to do it! I have had enough of the Religion, as you call it!" and she spoke with a tone of bitter contempt. "I am going to try what Holy Mother Church can do for me."

"And leave your father and mother, never to see them again—leave them in their old age, to break their hearts over their child's apostasy—"

"No hard words, if you please, Mademoiselle D'Antin," interrupted Lucille, with a strange smile. "Suppose at my first confession I choose to tell of contempt for the Sacrament, and so on? As to my father and mother, they will not care. Why did they not try to make me happy at home? Why did they love David the best? They have never been kind to me—never!"

"Every word you say is false!" I interrupted in my turn, far too angry for any considerations of prudence. "Your parents have always been good to you—far better than you deserved. Go, then, traitor as thou art—go, and put the crown to your baseness by betraying your friend! Sell yourself to Satan, and then find out too late what his service is worth. May Heaven comfort your poor father and mother!"

And with that I walked away, but so unsteadily that I could no longer balance my jug safely on my head. I stopped to take it in my hands, when I heard my name called, and in a moment Lucille came up to me.

"Do not let us part so, Vevette," said she. "I was wrong to speak to you as I did. Forgive me, and say good-by. We shall perhaps never meet again."

My heart was melted by these words.

"Oh, Lucille!" I cried, throwing my arms round her, "do not lose a moment! There is yet time. Hasten to your parents, and tell them what you have done. They will find a way for you to escape."

"And so have my father sent to the galleys for abducting a Catholic child?" said Lucille; "or perhaps have lighted matches tied to his fingers, or live coals laid on his breast, to force him to confess? No, Vevette, the deed is done, and I am not sorry—no, I am not sorry!" she repeated firmly. "Good-by, Vevette. Kiss me once, though I *am* an apostate. I shall not infect you. Comfort my mother, if you can."

I embraced her, and took my way homeward, stupefied with grief. I can safely say that if Lucille had been struck dead by a thunderbolt before my eyes the stroke would not have been more dreadful. My mother met me at the door of Grace's room, whither I went with my burden, hardly knowing more what I was doing than some wounded animal which crawls home to die.

"You are late, petite," said she; and then, catching sight of my face, she asked me what was the matter, repeating my name and her inquiry in the tenderest tones, as I fell into her kind arms and laid my head on her shoulder, unable to speak a word. Then in a new tone of alarm, as the ever-present danger arose before her,

"Has anything happened to your father, Vevette? Speak, my child!"

"Speak, Mrs. Vevette!" said Grace sharply. "Don't you see you are killing your mother?"

The crisp, imperative tones of command seemed to awaken my stunned powers.

"No, no, not my father," I said, "but Lucille;" and then I poured out my story.

"The wretched, unhappy girl! She has sacrificed herself in a fit of ill-temper, and is now lost to her family forever!" said my mother.

"But can nothing be done? Can we not save her, maman?" I asked.

"I fear not," said my mother. "The act was too public and deliberate, and they will not lose sight of her, you may be sure. Poor, deluded, unhappy girl! By one hasty act she has thrown away home, friends, and, I fear, her own soul also."

I burst into a fit of sobbing so hysterical that my mother, alarmed, hastened to put me to bed, and administer some quieting drops, which after a time put me to sleep. I did not wake till the beams of the rising sun startled me. I opened my eyes with that wretched dull feeling that something dreadful had happened, which we have all experienced. Then, as the truth came to my mind, I dropped my head again on my pillow in a fit of bitter weeping. But my tears did not last long. I remembered our guest in the tower, and that no one had been near him all the day before. I sprang up, dressed myself quickly and quietly, and slipped into my mother's room.

"Is that you, Vevette?" said maman sleepily. "Why are you up so early?"

"I am going to visit the pastor, maman," I answered softly; "no one has been near him since the night before last, and he must think it very strange. Besides, he will be in need of fresh provisions."

"Go, then, my precious one, but be careful. The keys of the storeroom are there on my table."

The storeroom was the peculiar domain of Mrs. Grace—a kind of shrine where she paid secret devotional rites, which seemed to consist in taking all the things out of the drawers and cupboards and putting them back again. I had never been in it more than once or twice, and it was with a feeling almost of awe that I took the key from the outer lock and shut myself in. What a clean, orderly, sweet-savoring little room it was. The odor of sweet herbs or gingerbread will even now bring the whole place vividly before my mind. I filled my basket with good things, not forgetting some of Mrs. Grace's English gingerbread and saffron-cakes and a bottle of wine. Then, as a new thought struck me, I took a small brass jar, such as is used for that purpose in Normandy, and stealing out I called my own cow from the herd waiting in the courtyard, and milked my vessel full. Just as I had finished, old Mathew appeared.

"You are early, mademoiselle," said he, smiling. "That is well. Early sunbeams make fresh roses. I know madame will enjoy her morning draught all the more for that it comes from your hands."

"I like to milk," said I; "but I must not stay. Maman will wonder where I am."

I took my basket from its hiding-place and hastened up the stairs to the tower. Before knocking I listened a moment at the door. The old man was up, and already engaged in prayer. I heard the most touching petitions put up for my father and mother and for myself. Surely all the prayers offered for me in my childhood and youth were not thrown away. It was for their sake that I was not left to perish in the wilderness of this world into which I wandered.

When the voice ceased I made the signal, and the door was opened.

"Ah, my daughter, good-morning," said the old man, with a benignant smile. "I began to fear some evil had befallen you or yours. Has not your father returned?"

"No, monsieur, he said he might possibly not arrive till to-night. I was ill last night, and not able to come to you. I hope you have not been hungry." And with some housewifely importance I arranged my provisions on the old table and poured out a tall glass full of the rich, frothy milk.

"This is indeed refreshing," said the old pastor after a long draught; "better than wine to an old man. Milk is for babes, they say; and I suppose as we approach our second childhood we crave it again. I remember, as I lay for four days in a cave by the sea-shore, with nothing to eat but the muscles and limpets, and no drink but the brackish water which dripped from the rocks, I was perpetually haunted by the remembrance of my mother's dairy, with its vessels of brass and red earthenware overflowing with milk and cream. But, my child, you are a bountiful provider. Will you not awaken suspicion?"

"Oh, no, monsieur; I have taken everything from the storeroom, where no one ever goes but maman and Mrs. Grace, her English gentlewoman. I must leave you now, but I will come again to-night."

I found my mother up and dressed. We had only just finished our morning reading when Julienne appeared, with the news that Simon and Jeanne Sablot desired to see madame.

"I fear the good woman has had news of her son," observed Julienne. "Her eyes are swollen with weeping."

"Bring them to me at once," said my mother. "Poor Jeanne! there is but One who can comfort her. I suppose Lucille has gone."

It was even so. Lucille had come home and done her share of work, as usual. She had sat up rather late, making and doing up a new cap for her mother. In the morning she did not appear, and Jeanne supposed she had overslept, and did not call her. Becoming alarmed at last, she went to her room, and found it empty. The bed had not been slept in. All Lucille's clothes were gone, but her gold chain and the silver dove worn by the Provençal women of the Religion, which she had inherited from her grandmother, were left behind. It was evident that Jeanne had no suspicion of the truth.

"She has left this writing," said she, producing a note, "though she knew that I could not read it. She has been talking more than once of late with that reprobate Pierre Le Febre. Doubtless she has gone away with him, and we can have no remedy, because he is of our enemies and we are of the Religion. Will madame have the goodness to read the note?"

"My poor Jeanne, the matter is not what you fear, but quite as bad," said my mother, reading the note, her color rising as she did so. "I fear you will never see poor Lucille again."

The note was a short and cold farewell, saying that the writer had become a Catholic, and was about to take refuge with the nuns at the hospital.

"I know I have never been a favorite with you, so I hope you will not be greatly grieved at my loss," was the cruel conclusion. "If I had had a happier home, things might have been different. Do not try to see me. It will only lead to trouble. Farewell."

I will not attempt to describe the anguish of the poor parents as the letter was finished. Simon was for going at once to the hospital to claim his daughter, and my mother with difficulty convinced him that such a step would be fruitless of anything but trouble.

"I would at least know that she is there," said Simon. "It may be that this is but a blind, after all."

"I fear not," said my mother; and she told him of the scene I had witnessed yesterday. Simon walked up and down the room several times.

"Let her go!" said he at last. "She has been the child of many prayers. It may be those prayers will be heard, so that she will not be utterly lost. Come, my wife, let us return to our desolate home. Madame has cares and troubles enough already."

"May God console you, my poor friends," said my mother. "Do not give up praying for the strayed lamb It may be that she will be brought home to the fold at last."

I suppose no Protestant here in England in these quiet days can have any idea of the feelings with which such an act as Lucille's was regarded by those of the Religion at that time. It seems even strange to myself, till I bring back by reflection the atmosphere in which we lived. That some should be led, through terror and torture, to deny their faith was to be expected. Many did thus conform, so far as outside appearances went—that is, they went to mass, even to communion, made the sign of the cross, and bowed their heads to the wayside images. These were looked upon with pity by the more steadfast brethren, and always received back into the church, on repentance and confession. But such a step as this of Lucille's was almost unheard of, and it produced a great commotion in our little Protestant community. It was not only a forsaking of the faith of her fathers, but a deliberate going over to the side of our treacherous oppressors —of those who made us to serve with cruel and hard bondage, who despoiled and tortured us, and trampled us into the very mire. And there was no remedy. The law declared that girls were able to become "*Catholics*"—such was the phrase of these arrogant oppressors—at twelve years old. Should one do so, she was to be taken from the custody of her parents, who were nevertheless obliged to support her. Later, matters were even worse. Little children of five and six years old, who could be deluded into kissing a wax doll, or looking into a church, or bowing the head to an image, were carried off, never to be heard of again. Often they were kidnapped without any such ceremony. The very pious Madame de Maintenon (whom some folks make quite a saint of nowadays) availed herself of this infamous law to a great extent, and many of the pupils at her famous school of St. Cyr were of this class. Thus she took both his children from her cousin, the Marquis de Villette, because the poor gentleman would not yield to her arguments, but made fun of them.*

As my mother had said to Simon Sablot, there was no redress. We of the Religion had no chance of justice, even in a merely civil suit, much more in a case like the present. It was openly said in the courts, when a man complained of an unrighteous judgment, "Ah, well, the remedy is in your hands. Why do you not become Catholic?" All new converts were permitted to put off the payment of their debts for three years, and were exempted from many taxes which fell heavily upon their brethren. In short, we were oppressed and trodden down always.

There were those, however, even of our enemies, who raised their voices against these infamous laws. Certain bishops, especially those inclined to Jansenism, protested against the Protestants being absolutely driven to commit sacrilege, by coming to the mass in an unfit frame of mind. Fénelon afterward wrote a most indignant letter to the king on the subject. The Bishop of Orleans absolutely refused to allow the quartering of dragoons on his people. More than one kind old curé or parish priest was exiled from the presbytery, where he had spent all his days, and sent to languish in some dreary place among the marshes or in the desolate sandes, for omitting to give notice of some heretic who had died without the sacraments, or for warning his poor neighbors of the approach of the dragoons. The very Franciscans who had charge of some of those dreadful prisons where poor women were shut up, after trying their best to convert their charges, would relent, and, ceasing to persecute them, would comfort them as well as they could by reading the Psalms and praying with them, smuggling in biscuits and fruit and other little dainties in their snuffy old pockets, and even, it was said, introducing now and then a Bible in the same way.* The Franciscans have always been the most humane of all the regular orders. But again I am wandering a long way from my story. However, I shall not apologize for these digressions. They are absolutely needful to make any reader understand what was the state of things in France at that time.

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* Souvenirs of the Marquise de Caylus, quoted by Felise. Any one who thinks Madame de Maintenon a pattern would do well not to read memoirs of her own days.

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* See the affecting story of the Tower of Constancy, told in many authors, and well repeated in Bungener's "Priest and Huguenot," a book not half appreciated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONELY GRANGE.

THAT evening my father came home, bringing with him my English cousin, Andrew Corbet, whom I had never seen, and whom he had been expecting for some days. He had come over in the train of the English ambassador, and therefore was to some extent a sacred person, though the name of Englishman was not at that time considered in Europe as it came to be afterward. Charles the Second was but a subsidized vassal of Louis the Fourteenth, as every one knew. It remained for the ungracious, silent little Dutchman, who came afterward, to raise England once more to her proper place among the nations. I may as well say here, not to make an unnecessary mystery, that Andrew Corbet was my destined husband, that arrangement having been made when we were both children. Such family arrangements were and are still common in France, where a girl's widest liberty is only a liberty of refusal, and a demoiselle would no more expect to choose her husband than to choose her parents. In England there has always been more opportunity for choice—an opportunity which has so greatly increased since I can remember that it is hard to see where it is going to end. I must say that, though I would never force a young person's inclinations, yet I do think the parents should have something to say as to their children's settlement. However, a person of discretion will find ways of managing such matters and preventing uncomfortable entanglements.

I suppose I was not intended to know of this affair quite so soon, but it came out through Mrs. Grace's fussy anxiety that I should appear well in the eyes of my intended bridegroom ; and, being once out, why, there was an end, as my mother said. I was not looking my best, by any means. Fourteen is not usually a beautiful age, and I was no exception to the general rule. I was naturally dark —"a true black Corby," my father said—and inclined to paleness, and my appearance was not at all improved by the dark lines under my eyes, caused by the grief and fatigue of the last few days. However, this same grief and care had a good effect in one way. They had brought my better nature uppermost for the time, and banished those day-dreams, which were my bane, so that I was much less awkward and self-conscious than I should otherwise have been. I was of course curious to see my future bridegroom, but I cannot say that I remember feeling any particular flutter or agitation on the occasion. I was too young for that, and I had had no opportunity to form any other fancy. In this country it would have been thought improper if not dangerous for me to associate so freely with a handsome young working-man like David Sablot, but I can safely say that such an idea never entered any one's head. The distinction of rank is very much more severely marked in France than here, and was much more so at that time than now; and besides, David was my foster-brother, and as such no more to be considered in any lover-like light than an own brother would have been. Andrew's only rival was a certain Lord Percy, a creature of my own imagination, who figured largely in that visionary world which I inhabited at times—an impossible creature, compounded of King Arthur, Sir Galahad, and some of the fine gentlemen I had come across in my stolen readings—who was to rescue me from unheard-of dangers, and endure unheard-of hardships in my behalf, though I never quite made up my mind whether he was to die at my feet or carry me off in triumph to his ancestral halls.

Andrew, certainly, was not the least like this hero of mine. He was handsome in a certain way, but that way was not mine. He was short, for one thing, and broad-shouldered, with a large nose, large gray eyes with dilating pupils, so that his eyes usually passed for black; and his hair and beard were so black as to be almost blue, and crisped like my own. No, he was not at all like Lord Percy; but, after all, I liked his looks. Andrew had been about the world a good deal for a man of his years, having been on two or three long sea-voyages, and he was by no means as awkward as young men of that age are apt to be. He saluted my mother and myself with considerable grace, I thought, and made himself at home in our house, with just enough and not too much freedom. On the whole I liked him very well. Oh, how I longed to tell Lucille about him ; and I shed some bitter tears at the thought that I should never confide in her again.

My father's first inquiry, after he was assured of our health and safety, was for the pastor, and he praised the courage and presence of mind I had shown.

"We must not *keep* the old man here," he said. "The tide will be favorable for his escape by the day after to-morrow, and an English ship will be waiting for him off the shore. But first I would fain have one more celebration of the Holy Supper with some of our poor friends. Heaven knows when we shall have another chance. But what is this I hear about the Sablots ?"

My mother repeated the story. My father listened with the greatest interest, and when it was finished, turning to me he asked, with anxiety, whether I were quite sure I had not been seen by the priest.

"Quite sure," said I. "I was hidden on the top of the rock, but I saw it all.

My father sighed. "The net is drawn closer and closer," said he. "Ah, my Marguerite, were you and the little one but in safety !"

"But I do not understand," said Andrew, speaking almost for the first time. "I see that this girl has become a Papist; but need that separate her entirely from her family? It would be a grief to them, of course; but could they not go their way, and let her go hers? Surely, they might at least give the poor thing a home."

"You do not understand, indeed, my poor Andrew," said my father, smiling sadly. And he explained the matter in a few choice words. Andrew's brow darkened, and he struck his hand on the table.

"And there are thousands upon thousands of you Protestants in France, able men, and many of you gentlemen used to arms, and yet you suffer such tyranny!" said he. "Why do you not rise upon your oppressors, and at least have a fight for your lives?"

"Hush, hush, my son," said my father. "Would you have us rise in rebellion against our king—the Lord's anointed!"

"The king is a man like another man, when all is done," said my cousin sturdily; "and has a joint in his neck, as the old Scotchman said. I have been in America, my cousin, where our colonies are growing, and where they seem to do fairly well at a pretty good distance from any king. As to such a man as this Louis being the Lord's anointed, any one may believe that who likes. *I* don't; or, if he is, he is such an one as Saul or Rehoboam."

"Some of our people talk as you do," said my father, while I looked at my cousin's firm lips and sparkling eyes with great approval; "but we are too much divided among ourselves on the subject to make any plan of resistance possible."

"Then I would flee to some better place," said Andrew. "Come over to Cornwall and set up your tent. There is a fine estate to be bought, not far from Tre Madoc. Some of the lands have mines upon them, which my father believes could be worked to advantage, and you could give employment to many of your oppressed countrymen. Why not go thither at once?"

"And leave my poor people?"

"The people are not in so much danger as you are," answered Andrew. "It is the high tree that falls in the storm. Think of my aunt and cousin here, condemned to such things as you have told me of, or left desolate by your loss. Surely you should consider them as well as your tenants."

Andrew spoke with great warmth, yet with due modesty, and I liked him better and better every moment. My mother and I both looked at my father.

"Here are two pairs of eyes pleading with you," said my father. "I must say that your plan is a most tempting one, if it could be carried out, and we are in a better position to make such an escape than many others, being so near the sea, and having a good deal of wealth laid by in jewels against a day of need. But, my son, let me most earnestly impress upon your mind the great need of caution in speech even among ourselves. Though all of our household are faithful, so far as I know, yet they are always liable to be tampered with, and we are never safe from spies and eavesdroppers. Such a speech as yours about the king, if reported, would be our utter ruin. Let me beg you, for all our sakes, to be careful."

I saw Andrew clinch his hand and set his teeth hard at the idea of such care being needful; and indeed it was a new care for him. Times were not very good in England just then, but they were far better than with us.

We separated, to prepare for supper. I dressed myself in my very best, to do honor to my cousin's arrival, though I was quite conscious, when I looked into my little mirror, that I did not look nearly so well in my fine damask gown and lace cap as I did in the gray-blue homespun which was my ordinary morning wear. Grace would sit up in bed to arrange my cap and lace my stays herself, and she drew them so tight I could hardly breathe.

The next morning I was sent down to Father Simon's cottage with a weighty message—no less important than this: that there would be a celebration of the Holy Supper, as we always called it, that very night, in the vaults under the lonely grange, which stood in a hollow of our domain. Simon was to send word to certain of the faithful at Sartilly and Granville. Andrew, who had already as it were taken possession of me, would go with me, and though Mrs. Grace demurred at such a freedom, he had his way. He always has had a great knack of getting his own way, partly, I think, because he goes on that way so quietly, without ever contradicting any one. I did not go by the lane this time, but through the orchard, over the heathy knoll, where my father and myself had had such an important conversation, and down the little ravine which the stream had made in its passage to the sea. It was a somewhat scrambling walk, and I liked it all the better for that. My ostensible errand was a search for fresh eggs, so I carried my little straw basket on my arm. I had a password in which to communicate my errand, and, meeting one of the old men who was to be summoned, I used it.

"Jean Martin, my father bids me ask you if the old grange will do to store the apples in?"

The old man's face lighted up, and he took off his hat.

"When should they be stored, mademoiselle?" he asked.

"To-morrow at high noon," was the answer.

"It is as safe a place as any. Thank your honored father and yourself. I will be there."

"What does that mean?" asked Andrew, as we went on; "why should that old fellow be so wonderfully pleased at being asked about a place to store the apples?"

"Hush!" said I, speaking English, which I now did quite perfectly. "You *must* learn not to talk so loud."

"I am like to lose the use of my tongue altogether, if I stay long in this country," said he discontentedly. "Well, cousin, I will squeak like a rere-mouse, if that will content you. But what does it mean?"

I explained the matter, taking care to speak in English, and in a low tone.

"So that was it," said he, in a tone of wonder mixed with compassion. "And will the old man really leave his bed at midnight, and risk not only the rheumatism but his life, on such an errand as that?"

"Yes, indeed, and his wife also, though she is very infirm," said I. "We of the Religion are used to such risks."

"I wonder what one of the farmers in our parish at Tre Madoc would say to such an invitation?" was Andrew's comment. "But what if you should be discovered?"

"Then we should be shot down like wolves, or carried away no one knows where. Such things happen every day."

"And in our free country, where every one can worship, the pastor has often hard work to gather a dozen people to the communion," remarked Andrew. "Truly, if Papist France deserves a judgment for suppressing the truth, I know not but England deserves as much for neglecting it."

"Are people there, then, so careless of their duties?" I asked.

"Many of them are. The court sets the worst example, and those of the gentry who frequent it are not slow to follow. And though there are in London itself and scattered all through the land faithful and earnest preachers of the Word, there are also far too many who think of the church only as a means of getting a living at a very easy rate. And yet I dare say a great many of these easy-going pastors, if it came to the pinch, would wake up and show that they could die for their faith, if need were. Only they would not die as easily as people seem to do over here," he added. "They would have a fight for it first."

"Our pastors do not think it right to fight," said I, a little vexed.

"I know they do not, and there is where I differ from them," said he. "Is this the farm where we are going? What an odd, pretty place! And what splendid old apple-trees!"

"Yes, Father Simon is very proud of his apples, poor man. The place does not look like itself," I added, with a sigh, as I missed Lucille from the bench before the door, where she would have been sitting with her distaff at this hour. We found Mother Jeanne going about her household work as usual, but in a sad, spiritless way, quite unlike her ordinary bustling fashion. Her face brightened, however, when she heard my errand, and she called in Simon to hear it also. To him I gave, in addition to the questions about storing the apples, a commission about cider-casks, to be executed at Sartilly.

"It is well," said he; "I shall attend to the matter. Our Master has not quite forgotten us, thou seest, my Jeanne, since he sends us such help and comfort by the way."

"Did you think he had, Father Simon?" I asked.

"Not so, Mamselle, but one's faith droops at times; and when one is weary and faint with the heat of the day, it is a wonderful comfort to come on a clear well of living water. Tell your honored father that I will attend to the matter."

"And about the eggs?" I asked.

"I have a few for madame, and Marie Duclas has some, I know."

"Who is this fine chevalier, my child?" asked Jeanne, as I followed her to the well-known outhouse where the hens' nests were. "Is he one of your English cousins?"

It was with some pride that I informed my foster-mother of Andrew's relation to myself. Jeanne was much affected. She clasped me in her arms and wept over me, calling me by every endearing name in her vocabulary, now lamenting that I should go so far away, and then rejoicing that I should be in safety.

"But, ah, my lamb, my precious one, do not set thy heart too strongly upon thy young bridegroom. Remember what times of shaking and separation these are, when the desire of one's eyes may be taken away with a stroke at any time. Ah, my poor daughter—my Lucille, my youngest lamb! Tell me, my Vevette, dost thou think I was ever unjust or unkind to her?"

"No, indeed!" I answered, with honest indignation, for my heart burned within me every time I thought of Lucille's cruel note of farewell. "Nobody ever had a better home or kinder friends. I imagine she will find out before many days what she has lost."

"I fear she will not be happy," said Jeanne, wiping her eyes. "I had lost so many before she came, and she was so delicate in her childhood that I was always more careful of her than of David, who never gave me an hour's anxiety since he was born, except on that unlucky day when he went to see the procession."

"I do not believe poor Lucille will be very happy anywhere—not unless she changes her disposition," said I. "It seems to me that a jealous person will always find something to torment him. But though I knew she was discontented, I never could have believed she would take such a step. Poor Lucille!"

"It is some comfort to speak of her," said Jeanne. "The father never mentions her name except in prayer. He feels the disgrace most deeply. I must tell you, my child, that that poor reprobate Pierre Le Febre came here yesterday, and most earnestly disclaimed having any hand in or knowledge of Lucille's decision. He confessed that he loved her, and would gladly have married her, and then he broke down and wept, saying that he should have felt her death less. He had been a bad man, but he had some human feeling left. Simon led him into the orchard and had a long talk with him, and this morning they met, and Pierre told him that he had gone with poor Isabeau before the priest and made her his wife. So some good has come out of the evil."

By this time Jeanne had set out some refreshment for us, of which we partook, not to seem ungracious. Andrew had been over the farm with Father Simon, and though his French was not the most fluent in the world, and Simon's was deeply flavored with patois, they seemed to get on together very well. I think two such manly, honest hearts could not fail to understand each other, though they had not a word in common. Andrew could not say enough in praise of the grand Norman horses and the beautiful little cows, but he turned up his nose at the buckwheat, and thought that a great deal more might be made of the land. We visited Lebrun's and one other farm, where we were received with the same welcome. Everywhere we heard comments on poor Lucille's conduct.

"The poor Jeanne was too easy with her. She indulged her far too much," said Marie Lebrun. "She took all the hardest and most unpleasant work on herself, to spare Lucille, and leave her time for her needlework and her fine spinning. If she had had to work as hard as my girls, she would not have had so much time to indulge her foolish fancies."

"Ah, Marie, it is easy to condemn," remarked her sister Marthe, who had never married, and was held in great respect among us for her piety and good works. "If Jeanne had taken the opposite course, people would have said it was because the child was so oppressed that she left her father's house. It is easy to say what might have been. A parent may do her best, and yet the child may go wrong."

"I am not so sure of that," said Marie, with some complacency. "'Train up a child in the way he should go,' you know."

"'My beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill,'" quoted Marthe; "'and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and also made a wine-press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' If the great Lord of the vineyard met with such a disappointment, shall we blame the under-gardeners when the vintage does not answer our expectations? Ah, my Marie, after all, that others can do for us; we must each build our lives for ourselves. We cannot cast off the responsibility on any one else."

I have many a time thought of these words of the good Marthe, when I have heard parents blamed for the faults of their grown-up children. Poor Marthe! she was one of the victims of the times, and died in prison.

As we walked homeward Andrew and I fell into conversation about our future prospects. He told me of his house at Tre Madoc, which was, however, his mother's as long as she lived; of the increased wealth which had come to them from the working of a mine on his estate; and described to me the old house and its surroundings till I could almost see it. Then he asked me frankly, in his sailor fashion, whether I liked him, and whether I thought I could be happy with him; to which I answered, with equal frankness,

"I do not see why I should not, cousin—that is, if your mother will be kind to me."

"You need not fear that," answered Andrew. "She is kindness itself, and my sisters are good merry girls. But about myself."

"I like you very much," I answered, with true Norman bluntness, "and I am glad you came here. I wish you were going to stay. It is as nice as having an own brother."

To my surprise Andrew did not seem at all pleased with this remark of mine. He colored, muttered something between his teeth about brothers which did not sound very complimentary, and was rather silent during the rest of our walk. Afterward, from something I caught, I fancy he had been speaking of the matter to my mother, for I heard her say,

"You are too precipitate, my son. Think how young the child is, and how carefully she has been brought up. You must trust to time and your own merits for the growth of a warmer feeling."

Andrew has since told me that he loved me from the very first time he heard me speak. How long and steadfastly that love endured, through evil and good report, hoping against hope, triumphing over danger and distance, it must be mine to tell, though the story is not much to mine own credit.

That night about eleven o'clock, after all the younger servants had gone to bed, my mother and myself, with the pastor, wrapped in our long black cloaks, stole forth in the darkness. My father and Andrew had gone away on horseback early in the afternoon, ostensibly to Avranches, but we knew we should find them waiting for us at the appointed place. We dared not take a lantern lest it should betray us, but found our way, by the stars and the cold diffused light of an aurora, to the little rocky dell in the midst of the fields where stood the lonely grange. It was a great rambling stone building, very old, but strong still. Nobody knew when or for what purpose it had been first erected, but my father believed it to be of great antiquity. It was not much used at present, save for a storehouse for grain and cider, but the old Luchons lived in two tolerably comfortable rooms on the ground floor of the old tower. The walk had been long and rough for us all, and especially for my mother, and we were not sorry to see the tower standing dark against the sky, and to meet the challenge of our outposts; for at all our meetings we had our sentinels and our pass-words. My father and Andrew were on the lookout for us, and Andrew nearly crushed my hand off in the fervor of his joy at finding me safe.

We passed though the old Luchons' kitchen into the great room or hall which occupied the center of the building, and which was crowded with empty casks and sheaves of grain. Threading our way amid these obstructions, which would have appeared impenetrable to any one not in the secret, we descended a flight of stairs to the vault, where most of our brethren were assembled. A rude platform was built up at one end, before which stood a small table covered with a white cloth. The congregation consisted of several of the neighboring farmers and some of the poorer laborers with their wives, and now and then a grown-up son or daughter, and a few tradespeople and fishermen from Granville, who had run a double danger to break the bread of life once more. The only gentry beside ourselves were the Le Roys, from near Sartilly, who had brought their child for baptism. Not one of the family is alive now. Of that little company, more than half witnessed for their faith on the scaffold or under the muskets of their enemies. I suppose so many of the Religion could not now be gathered in all Normandy.

It was touching to see the joy of the poor people at having a pastor once more. Many of them had seen Monsieur Bertheau before. These crowded round him, and happy was the man or woman who could obtain a grasp of his hand or a word from his lips. But there was little time to be spent in friendly greetings. The congregation took their places, and the service began.

When I shut my eyes, how vividly the whole scene comes before me—the rough vault, but dimly lighted by a few wax torches; the earnest, calm face and silver hair of the pastor; the solemn, attentive congregation, the old people occupying the front rank, that their dull ears might not lose a word; Monsieur and Madame Le Roy, with their beautiful babe wrapped in a white cashmere shawl. I can smell the scent of the apples and the hay mingled with the earthy, mouldy smell of the vault, and hear the melodious voice, trembling a little with age, as the old man read:

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."

I think no one can fully understand these words who has not heard them under circumstances of danger, or at least of sorrow. Andrew was deeply affected by them; and when the little lily-white babe was brought forward for baptism, he put down his head and almost sobbed aloud. My father had been somewhat unwilling to have him run the risk of attending the meeting, but he had insisted, and he told me afterward, and has often told me since, that he would not have missed it for anything. I know that the service was greatly blessed to my own heart, and for a long time afterward I was quite a different creature—I may say, indeed, for all my life, since, though for a time choked by the thorns of this world, the seed sown that night always remained, and at last, as I hope, has borne some fruit to the sower.

Our meeting was not to pass off without an alarm. The pastor had just finished distributing the bread and wine when one of the lookouts came down to say that he had heard a distant sound like the galloping of horses, which drew nearer every moment. All were at once on the alert. The lights were extinguished below, and also in the kitchen above. Another great cellar opened from the one we were in, and here, since there was no time to get away, we hid ourselves, waiting in breathless suspense, but calm and collected, for whatever might be coming. The very youngest children never uttered a cry or whimper, and the only sound heard was a whispered prayer or encouragement passed from one to another. But oh how welcome was the voice which announced that the alarm was a false one! A herd of young horses had broken from their pasture and rushed abroad over the fields, scared, perhaps, by some stray wolf. It was thought best to break up our gathering at once, and exchanging short but earnest farewells we all reached our homes in safety. Several of the old people, worn out by the fatigue and agitation, died within a short time, and the sweet babe only survived its baptism for a few weeks. Happy child! to be taken in its innocence from the evil to come.

The next night the pastor left us. He went out in a fishing-boat, hoping to meet an English ship which was expected off the coast, but the ship was detained by contrary winds. A sudden storm came up, and the boat was capsized. With him were two sailors, sons of a widow in the little village from which he embarked. One perished; the other was picked up and carried to Jersey, where he lay long ill of a fever. But he recovered at last, and it was from him we heard the story.

CHAPTER VII.

A SUDDEN SUMMONS.

FOR about a fortnight or more after the departure of the pastor we had a very quiet, pleasant time. The weather was lovely, and we made long excursions out of doors. We gathered apples and quinces, and hunted for herbs and flowers, for Andrew was a good deal of an herbalist (a botanist, I think they call it now, though I am sure herbalist is the prettier word), and he was in correspondence with some learned gentleman in London on the subject of plants. He told me many things about flowers that I had never known or dreamed of before, showing me the several parts of the blossom, the leaves, and roots, by means of a pocket magnifying-glass which he always carried about him. He read to my mother and myself as we sat at our embroidery or spinning, and he held endless gossips with my mother about old families in Cornwall and Devonshire, and people and places she used to know. I listened with great interest to these tales, for I had begun now to look upon Tre Madoc as my future home, and any detail concerning it was of interest to me. I was growing more and more fond of my cousin all the time, and the image of Lord Percy had quite ceased to haunt my imagination.

I do not think that I ever spent two happier weeks in all my life. For one thing, I was at peace with myself. The events of the last month had aroused my conscience and wakened the religious principles implanted by education to new life. I laid aside the dreams of worldly pleasure and ambition, which usually occupied so much of my time, and kept my conscience in a state of chronic discomfort, and I really did begin to experience some of those higher and holier joys of which poor Lucille had spoken in that memorable conference of ours. True, we were still under the power of our enemies—still in danger at any time of losing liberty and life. But one becomes used to danger as to everything else, and somehow to me the presence of my cousin seemed a protection, though if I had been asked *why*, I could not have told for my life.

Andrew was very earnest with my parents to consent to our being married immediately. He said, and with some show of reason, that he should then have the right to protect me, whatever happened, and that the fact of my father's daughter having married a British subject might be some advantage to him. This, however, my father doubted. He had no idea that the English government would quarrel with Louis on any such frivolous pretext.

Both he and my mother were opposed to such early marriages, though they were common enough at the time, and moreover they wished to learn a little more about Andrew before giving their only child wholly into his hands. So the matter was postponed for an indefinite time.

Of course I should have acquiesced in any arrangement made by my honored parents, and I do not think I should have found any difficulty in doing so, for, as I have said, I liked Andrew better and better every day. But my heart had not awaked to love in its highest sense. I looked upon Andrew as a big brother, very nice to play with, and to order about, but that was all. I had, besides, very high though very indefinite notions of the duties and responsibilities of a married woman, and dreaded assuming them, all the more because my mind was more awakened to a sense of duty than it had ever been before. On the whole I very much preferred to let matters remain as they were.

The feast of St. Michael occurred during Andrew's stay, and it was to be celebrated with more pomp than usual. The new curé was very zealous in beating up for pilgrims to the shrine, and, as we heard, preached more than one sermon on the subject. We had had a bad harvest that year of everything but apples, and the fishing had been unusually unsuccessful. This the curé attributed to the anger of our great patron, St. Michael, because his feast day had been neglected of late, owing—so he said, though I don't think it was true—to the influence of the heretics who were allowed to defile the holy soil of La Manche with their presence ; and he threatened the people with still severer judgments unless the great archangel were appeased by a grand pilgrimage, and by the purification of the holy soil before mentioned.

"St. Michael must have been rather astonished at the acts attributed to him, if he happened to be anywhere in the neighborhood," said Andrew ; but my father shook his head.

"It is no laughing matter," said he. "We have lived in great peace with our Roman Catholic neighbors, under the rule of the last curé, who was a kind-hearted old man, much fonder of his garden and orchard than of his breviary ; but this new priest is of a different type. He is doing his best to arouse the fanaticism of the peasants, and especially of the lower and more debased class. I do not believe he would hesitate to hold out, as an inducement, the plunder of the tower."

"Would he dare do that ?" asked Andrew.

"It has been done in a hundred instances," answered my father. "It is no lower motive than that of relieving a man of the payment of his honest debts, on condition of his returning to the bosom of the church, and that has been done by a public edict."

"And this is the king who must not be resisted, because, forsooth, he is the Lord's anointed !" said Andrew, with that peculiar flash of his gray eye, like sunlight reflected from bright armor, that I had learned to know so well.

"The king is governed by his counsellors," said my father.

"As to that," answered Andrew, "he does not seem to be very much governed by his counsellors in the matter of his building and gambling expenses, and—some other things," catching a warning glance from my mother. "I thought he made a boast that *he* was the state. As to his being deceived, why does he not find out for himself? Things are no better in Paris than here. How can he be ignorant of what happens under his very nose?"

"Very easily, my son. A good many things happen under the very nose of His Majesty King Charles of England which do not seem to make much impression on his mind," said my father, a little testily. He had his full share of that unreasoning loyalty—unreasonable, too, as I think—which possessed all France, Protestant and Catholic, at that time. "We have all heard how the king was engaged the night that the Dutch sailed up the river. You cannot propose him as a model, nephew!"

"I never said he was," answered Andrew dryly, and then the conversation stopped.

The next morning I went out very early into the lane to look for a pair of scissors which I had dropped the day before, when I was joined by my cousin.

"Yevette," said he, "is there no place from which we can view this procession in safety? I have a great curiosity about it."

"Oh, yes, we can do so from the top of the rock at the end of our lane, if you like," I answered. "But we must make haste thither, for they will soon be on their way."

I was all the more ready for the adventure as I hoped to obtain a glimpse of Lucille.

We were soon safely hidden among the tall bushes and wild vines which covered the top of the rock, but not too soon, for we were hardly settled before the head of the procession appeared in sight. It had been joined by pilgrims from all parts of Normandy, and looked like a little army. The cross-bearer came first, as usual, then a company of priests, loudly chanting as they walked, then banners without number, and I know not what devices besides of images and angels and what not. Then came a company of women, headed by the nuns from the hospital, each leading by the hand one of the new converts, as they were called, in bitter derision. The poor little Luchon was there, pale and thin as a shadow. Her wasted hand held a rosary like the rest, but it drooped listlessly by her side. Either the sad-faced nun who led her by the other hand did not think it worth while to have a public contest with her, or she had tried and failed, for she did not interfere with the child, and, I even fancied, looked at her with an eye of pity. Lucille was one of the last. I saw in a moment that she was at least no happier than she had been at home, for the dark shade was on her face which I knew so well. However, she was telling her beads as diligently as the best of them. As she passed the foot of the rock she looked up. I had ventured a little nearer the edge than was quite prudent, and our eyes met for a moment. She made me a warning sign, and then a bitter smile curled her lips, and she pressed to them with fervor the crucifix attached to her rosary. Her companion looked up also, but saw nothing, as I had shrunk back from my dangerous position. That was the last time I saw my old playmate for many a long day, though I heard from her once or twice, as I have reason to remember.

There were more banners and more pilgrims, but I saw none of them. I had retreated to the back of the cliff and thrown myself down on the moss in a fit of bitter weeping. I had loved Lucille dearly, despite our many quarrels, and I believe she loved me as much as her self-absorbed nature would let her love any one. Hers was an asking love, always thinking more of what it was to get than of what it had to give.

Andrew was so absorbed in the spectacle that he did not miss me till all were past, and when he came to find me he was frightened at my agitation. It was some time before I could even be got to move or speak. Andrew brought me water in a little drinking-cup he always carried, fanned me, and soothed me with the greatest tenderness, and at last I was able to tell him the story.

"Then that was the girl who looked up," said he. "I thought there was something peculiar about her. She does not look very happy with her new friends. I wonder what they will do with her?"

"Make a nun of her, if they can squeeze her dowry out of Father Simon, or perhaps marry her up to some one," I answered. "Julienne's sister says the Le Febres are very angry with Pierre for marrying his old sweetheart Isabeau, when he might have waited and taken Lucille and her farm."

"But the farm is her father's, and will descend to her brother, won't it?" asked Andrew in surprise. "Did you not tell me she had a brother who was expected home?"

"Yes, my foster-brother, David. You will like him, I am sure. But he is of the Religion, like his father, and if Lucille should marry a Catholic* the law would find some way of handing the farm over to him, though David is honest and industrious, and Pierre is a bit of a reprobate. I hope David will come; I should like you to see him."

"Pierre may be a bit of a reprobate, but he is a good bit of a man as well," said Andrew. "I saw him give that great hulking Antoine Michaud a blow that knocked him flat because he insulted that poor old woman whose grandchildren were taken away from her."

(I forgot to mention that poor old Gran'mere Luchon had been allowed to return to her cottage, being, I suppose, too small game to be worth the

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*** I do not like to use Catholic in this sense, but we were in a manner forced to it at that time.—G. C.**

bagging, or perhaps with the hope of catching some one else by her means.)

"He knows how to sail a boat, too," continued Andrew. "I went out with him yesterday, and I never saw a boat better handled, though it is a horrid old tub, too. Such a fellow ought to be a soldier or sailor. Many a man has made a good record on shipboard who would never do anything for himself."

"I hope he will be good to poor Isabeau," said I. "But come, Andrew, we must go home."

We had been sitting all this time on the top of the rock, in the very place where Lucille had cleared a spot for her spindle. As we rose we both cast a glance over the landscape.

"There is going to be a storm," said I. "See how the sea-birds are all flying to shore, and how the fog is beginning to creep in from the sea. I am glad I am not going to cross the Grèves this day. Some one is sure to go astray and be lost."

"Drowned by the tide?" asked Andrew.

"Yes, or more likely sucked under by the quicksands, which extend themselves very much at times. There is hardly ever a great pilgrimage but some one is lost. Come, we must be going. My mother will wonder where we are."

The storm I had predicted came on later in the day, just in time to catch many of the returning pilgrims, and several were drowned, among them, as we heard, the poor little Suchon and the nun who had her in charge.

"One cannot be sorry for the child," remarked my father when he heard the news. "She has ecsaped a great deal."

"Nor for her companion either, if there be any truth in looks," said Andrew. "I never saw a sadder, more hopeless face. Did you not notice it, Vevette?"

"I did," I answered. "I noticed, too, that she looked compassionately on the poor child, and did not try to force her to tell her beads, like some of the others."

"This storm is an unlucky thing for us," said my mother. "I can see well how it will be used to excite the people more and more against us. Armand, when shall we leave this place, and put our children and ourselves in safety?"

"As soon as Mrs. Grace is able to travel," answered my father. "We could not leave her behind, or take her along at present. I trust another month will see us in England. I would not leave my people so long as my presence was any protection to them, but I think, as things are now, they would be better without me."

"Could not your brother in Paris secure you a protection from the king?" asked Andrew. "He seems to be a great courtier, and greatly in favor."

"So great a courtier that he would not risk a frown from the king to save my whole family from destruction," answered my father dryly. "No, there is nothing to hope and everything to fear from attracting the notice of any one about the king. I have looked the matter all over, and tried to gain every light on the subject that I was able,'' continued my father gravely; "I have also asked counsel of such of our pastors as I have been able to meet with, and my mind is made up. So soon as Grace is able to travel we must endeavor to escape. So, my wife and daughter, you must pack up your valuables and necessaries in the smallest possible compass, and keep the bundles where you can lay your hands upon them at any moment. But mind, the necessaries must be reduced to the lowest point,'' he added, with that sorrowful smile I had learned to know so well. "Vevette cannot carry her story books nor her carved wheel, nor madame her rose-bushes or her poultry, or Mrs. Grace her precious marmalade. A very few clothes and the jewels and a little money are all we can take with us.''

These words fell coldly upon my ear and heart. I was familiar enough with the idea of flight, but I had not realized that flight meant leaving behind all my most cherished possessions—my beloved books, my lute, my pet cows, all that I treasured most. I went up to my pretty little room, and, sitting down, I wept as if my heart would break for a while. Then I knelt down and prayed, with all sincerity and earnestness, that I might have grace cheerfully to abandon all I had, yea and mine own life also, if need be, for the kingdom of heaven's sake; and after a while, feeling comforted and strengthened, I arose and began looking over my possessions, to see what should be taken and what left. I do not think that in this I was foolish or even childish. It is not seldom that very little things bring home to us the bitterness of grief. I have seen a lady who was perfectly cool, collected, and sweet-tempered through all the dangers of a terrible storm and shipwreck and the miseries of dreadful sea-sickness, protracted for weeks, break down in an agony of grief because the little dog she had brought from France was swept overboard from the wreck in which she might herself go down at any moment.

But poor Mrs. Grace was destined to take a longer journey than that we proposed, and to find a refuge where neither danger nor home-sickness can enter—where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. She had been for several weeks confined to her bed. One day my father and mother, Andrew and myself set out for a long walk over the domain. It was rather a silent and sorrowful expedition, for, though no one said so, we all felt that it might be a last farewell. We called at Simon Sablot's farm, and my father confided to Simon certain weighty deposits and an important secret concerning his own affairs, and told him where certain valuable packages would be found in case he should be obliged to send for them. I should say that for several nights my father and Andrew had been busily occupied in conveying to places of safety so much of our stock of plate as could be removed without suspicion. This was the more easy because we used very little silver every day, the rest being secured in a strong closet which opened from my father's room. We went through the orchards and the little vineyard, visited the old people at the lonely grange, walked through the chestnut wood and filled our pockets with the nuts, which were just ripening and falling.*

"There is a fine harvest of chestnuts at least," said my mother, sighing. "I hope some one will be the better for them."

My father pressed the hand that lay on his arm, but he could not trust himself to speak. The moment was an unspeakably bitter one to him. He had taken great pains with his estate, and had laid out much money in improvements, not only for his own profit but still more for the good of his tenants. Every field and tree and vine, yea, every bush and stone, was dear to his heart, and though he did not hesitate--no, not for a moment, when he had to choose between these things and the kingdom of heaven—yet he could not but feel the wrench when he had to tear himself away from them. I sometimes fear, in these days when the church and the world are so mixed together that it is rather hard to see any division line between them, that people will utterly lose the meaning of such places of Scripture as the tenth chapter of St. Matthew.

We had not reached the tower when Julienne came running to meet us, her face as pale as her cap.

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* The fine chestnut-tree at the south end of the house is from one of these nuts. I trust no one will ever cut it down.—G. C.

"Thank Heaven, you are come, madame!" said she breathlessly. "I have sent everywhere for you. Mamselle Grace has had a swoon, and we cannot bring her to herself."

"A swoon? How was that?" asked my mother, as we all quickened our steps. "I thought she was feeling very well this morning."

"She was, madame; but you were no sooner out of the house than she would make me help her up and dress her, and she has been up ever since. She would even walk into your room, leaning on my arm, and sat there while I dusted the furniture, though I had dusted it all not more than an hour before," said Julienne, in an aggrieved voice. "Then she would have her work-basket and darn a cambric ruffle of monsieur's, and all I could say she would not lie down. I assure madame that I did my best to persuade her."

"I doubt it not, my good Julienne; but what then?"

"Then, just as the bell rang for noon, she said she felt tired, and would lie down. I called Marie and Annette, for I saw she looked dreadfully ill; but we had not got her on the bed before she fainted, and we cannot get a sign of life from her any more than if she were dead. So I sent for madame."

We had reached the tower by that time, and my mother ran up-stairs to Mrs. Grace's room, closely followed by myself. Though I had never, to my knowledge, seen death before, I knew, the moment I set eyes upon Grace, what had happened. People talk of death and sleep being alike, but I can never see the resemblance. We tried a long time and in every way to bring back animation, but it was of no use, and we soon came to perceive that our good faithful friend had left us forever.

I cannot describe my mother's grief on the occasion. Grace had been her own personal attendant ever since she could remember. She had been taken into my grandmother's nursery a little maid of nine years old, and had been specially assigned to my mother. She had followed her mistress to a strange land, had been with her through all her ill-health and the loss of her many children, had been nurse, friend, companion, and servant, all in one. I loved Grace dearly, lamented her deeply; but the event was not to me what it was to my mother.

However, she was gone, and there was an end. The servants wept, too, as they prepared her body for the grave. They forgot all the scoldings she had given them, and only remembered how she had nursed them in sickness, and the numberless kindnesses she had shown them and their friends at home.

"I was vexed enough at her this morning," sobbed Julienne, who, as a bit of a slattern, and especially as being guilty of the crowning enormity of having a sweetheart, most frequently fell under the displeasure of Mrs. Grace; "but I am sure I would dust all the furniture of the house thrice over if it would do her any good."

"And what will madame do without her?"

asked Marie. "Nobody can know her ways like Mamselle Grace, though there are perhaps others who can govern the household as well, or even better. I always thought she was very wasteful of sugar and honey in preserving the fruits."

"Yes, you would like them as sour as last year's cider," retorted Julienne. "Mamselle Grace was not a skinflint, whatever else she was."

"What will you do about the funeral?" asked Andrew of my father. "Shall you send to Granville or Avranches for an undertaker?"

"No indeed!" answered my father. "I have given special orders to the servants not to say a word about poor Grace's death. It would be sure to bring down upon us a visitation. Mathew is making her a coffin now, and we must place the body in the vault beneath the chapel, as soon as may be—this very night, if possible. There she may perhaps rest in peace. I would not, if I could help it, have my poor old friend's body thrown out into a ditch like a dead dog."

"They would not dare to do it," said Andrew, aghast.

"They would be sure to do it," was my father's answer. "Things have not improved since the Duke of Guise kicked the dead face of brave old Coligny. If it were only the dead who were warred upon it would not be so much matter."

"And yet somehow an insult to the dead seems baser and more cowardly than one offered to the living," said Andrew thoughtfully. "Many a rude fellow who would knock a man down as soon as look at him, as we say, would be horrified at any rough treatment of a corpse. Why is it?"

"Partly, perhaps, from superstition, but more from an idea that the dead are helpless to defend themselves," answered my father. "If a man have any manhood in him his heart will be touched by the plea of helplessness. It is only when men are turned into demons by war or cruelty or lust that they will disregard the plea of helplessness."

That very night at midnight the corpse of our good old friend was conveyed down to the vault, beneath the ruined chapel, and built into one of the niches of the wall with some of the rough stones which lay loose about the floor. I had never been in the vault before, and my father cautioned me to beware how I stepped. The floor was of the natural rock, rough and uneven, and in some places were deep cracks from which issued a solemn roaring sound, now loud, now faint and almost dying away. By one of the niches I have mentioned which surrounded the vault, and which were like small chambers hewn in the rock, was placed a little pile of building materials. In this chamber was placed the body of our good old friend. My father read from my mother's prayer-book the funeral service of the Church of England, so solemn, touching, and comforting. Then the vault was built up with stones taken from the floor, and carefully daubed with mould and slime, to look as much like the rest of the wall as possible. It was a dreary funeral enough, but not so sad as was many another in these sad days, when many a dutiful child had to look on and see the body of father or mother dragged away on a hurdle and cast into a bog or buried in a dunghill.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLIGHT.

THE next day my father took Andrew and myself once more into the vault—this time by the secret passage which led from the pastor's room in the tower. We had a lantern with us, which we lighted as soon as we had shut ourselves in, for the lower passage and the staircase were quite dark.

"I made a discovery in this place some years since, which I think may be of great service to us, if worse comes to worst," said my father. "There used to be a legend to the effect that a great cavern existed under this vault which had an outlet to the sea-shore, and to which there was formerly an entrance from this place. It was said that this entrance had been built up on account of some dreadful crime committed in the cavern. However that may be, in trying, when a young man, to satisfy my curiosity upon the subject, I found an underground passage leading from hence to the little ruined tower in the orchard, which you were teaching Vevette to sketch the other day."

"How curious!" said Andrew. "What could it have been used for?"

"Probably for a sally-port in the days when the house was fortified. Such underground ways are not uncommon in old buildings. It may serve us a good turn upon a pinch; but you must help me to open it, and you, Vevette, must hold the light. I built it up myself with the hewn stones which seem to have been left here from ancient times, perhaps from the time that the entrance was closed to the cavern below. No one knows the secret but old Sablot, who died the other day, and who assisted me in the work. So as there is no one else about the place whom I dare trust, I must even ask you, my fair son, to turn laborer for once, and help me with these same stones."

"I want no better fun," said Andrew, pulling off his coat at once. "I have been suffering for some hard work ever since I came here."

"Is that the reason you go out so often with Pierre Le Febre in his new boat?" I asked. For my father, seeing that Pierre was really making a great struggle to do well, had given him a fine new fishing-boat, to be paid for in very small installments, as he could afford, and the poor fellow and his wife were very grateful.

"Partly for that reason, and partly because I am interested in the man himself," answered Andrew. "He is one who, under good teaching, would have made a brave seaman. If I read him aright, he is one of those people who need grand motives—more than the mere living and working from day to day, and I have been trying in my stupid way to set before him something of the sort. He was as much astonished when I told him that God was his Father, and was pleased when he did well and grieved when he did ill, as if he had been brought up among the heathen I have seen in the Indian seas. But I beg your pardon, sir ; I did not mean to preach." And Andrew caught himself up and blushed like a girl, for, like other young men, he was dreadfully ashamed of having any one think he was trying to be good.

"I do not see why you should beg my pardon, dear son," said my father, with a smile—that sweet, sudden smile which does so light up a usually grave face, and which I see again sometimes on my sober little Armand. "Surely it is a blessed work, and one which God will own. But I must warn you that it is not without danger. You may be accused of proselyting, which is one of our deadliest sins in the eyes of our enemies."

"Well," said Andrew, with a great sigh, "I think I shall appreciate it if I reach a land where a man may open his mouth. Why should you delay any longer ? Why not fly to-night ?"

"Because my arrangements are not yet complete," said my father.

"If you wait till everything is ready you will never go at all," said Andrew.

"That is true ; but there are certain things yet to be arranged concerning those who stay behind. I must see our friends at Avranches, and leave with them some means of raising funds to help themselves withal. To-morrow I shall go thither, and the day after I hope to go—but why should I say *hope?*" he murmured, in the sad voice I knew so well. "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him, but weep, son, for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

"If my native country was such a step-dame as this, I don't think I should bemoan it very much," muttered Andrew between his teeth.

"Don't the people who have gone away and settled in America long to see England again?" I asked.

"No, I don't believe they do," he said. "They are as self-satisfied as any people I ever saw. And yet I don't know," he added. "The names they give their children are very touching, especially those on the stones in their burying-ground."

"What names?" I asked.

"Such names as 'Hopestill,' 'Waitstill,' 'Submit,' 'Resignation,' and the like. I read one epitaph over a little baby girl which runs thus:

'"Submit submitted to her Heavenly King,
Being a flour of that Eternal Spring!
Near three years old, she died, in Heaven to wait;
The year was sixteen hundred forty-eight.'

Not the best of poetry, you will say, but very affecting to my mind."

"Come, come, son," said my father; "we did not come into this mouldy old hole to repeat verses. Let us set to work."

Andrew blushed again, and at once bent himself to the task of removing the heavy stones. This was hard work, especially as it was necessary to make as little noise about it as possible; but it was accomplished at last, and the arched entrance of the passage made practicable. More my father did not care to do.

"Now for the other end," said my father. "Vevette, are you afraid?"

"No indeed!" said I indignantly.

"Vevette is a real Corbet woman!" said Andrew. "She is afraid of nothing."

"Except of being laughed at," returned my father. "Come, then, give me the light. I will go first, and do you young ones follow, carefully, and looking to your steps."

I was about to speak, but my father put his finger upon his lip.

"We will not talk," whispered he; "we are now outside the bounds of the vault, and may be overheard."

Accordingly we proceeded in silence for some hundred yards, sometimes able to walk upright, sometimes bending almost double, as the walls and roof contracted, till our further passage was barred by a heap of large stones. These, however, being loosely piled, were easily removed, and we found ourselves in a cellar-like vault, in which were piled up old cider-casks. (All such places in that part of Normandy always are full of useless old casks, though what they are kept for I cannot say.)

From this vault a ruined but passable staircase led up to the level of the ground. I shall never forget how beautiful everything looked to me as we emerged from the deeps of the earth and saw the whole landscape bathed in the mild autumnal sunshine. My heart bounded for a moment and then sank as in a deep of cold, bitter waves, when I thought how soon I must leave all this beauty, never, never to see it again. English people sometimes fancy that French people do not care for their homes because they have no one word which answers to the English one. It is just one of those pieces of insular pride and—I was going to say stupidity—which always enrage me, though I am half an English woman by birth and wholly one by adoption.

"Ah, fair France!" said my father mournfully; "thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee. Surely the day will come when thou shalt desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it. Thou hast condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist thee!"

"And that is where the just is not of my mind," muttered Andrew between his teeth. "If he were he would have one fight for it."

My father did not hear, but I did, and gave Andrew a look, partly of approbation, partly of warning. I felt as he did. If we could only have fought for our lives I should not have minded it so much.

We returned by the fields, after my father and Andrew had shut up the entrance to the passage with the loose stones in such a manner that they could easily be removed. As to the other end, we were not afraid to leave it open, since not one of our farm or house servants would have descended into the vault for any consideration. We found my mother anxiously expecting us.

"You are gone a long time," said she. "Here is a strange visitor—no less than a Capuchin friar—who says he used to know you, and desires much to see you."

"A friar!" said my father, turning pale. "What can he want? Where is he?"

"Eating and drinking in the dining-room at this moment, if he is not asleep in his chair," answered my mother. "I could do no less than offer him hospitality, especially as he asked no impertinent questions, and had nothing to say about religious matters. He seems a harmless old soul enough."

"Many of them are, I believe, while others are wolves in sheep's clothing," said my father; "but I shall soon see to which class our friend belongs."

My father went to the dining-room, where he shut himself in with his guest and remained a long time, apparently in earnest conversation. Finally, however, we saw him accompany the friar to the gate and take a friendly leave of him.

"Well, what had your ghostly father to say?" asked my mother when my father returned to us.

"Nothing more than I knew already," replied my father. "Did you not know him? It was my old playmate and companion in arms, Louis de Reviere."

"I thought there was something familiar in his face and voice," said my mother. "But what brought him here, and in that dress?"

"He has taken the tonsure, and is now a Franciscan," answered my father. "He had always rather a turn for a religious life, as they call it. As to his errand, he came ostensibly to convert me—really to warn us of danger, and beg us to fly. He says that a company of dragoons will be at Avranches next week. Ah, my poor people!"

"Do not give way, my Armand," said my mother tenderly. "But now, tell us clearly, what is your plan?"

"To set forth by night and travel to Honfleur by the most retired roads, disguised in the peasant dresses I bade you prepare. You and Vevette will ride the donkeys. Andrew and myself will walk beside you. We will also have another beast laden with poor Grace's dried fruits and confections which we are carrying to Honfleur to sell. Once there we shall find English ships, and, I trust, have no difficulty in making our way. Simon Sablot is in the secret, and will have the animals all ready."

"And when shall we set out?" I asked anxiously.

"To-morrow night, my little one. I must go once more to Avranches to bestow in safety the money belonging to our consistory, which thou knowest is in my hands."

"Could not Simon take the money to Avranches?" asked my mother.

"And thus run the risk while I was escaping? Nay, my Margaret, that is not spoken like thyself. But, in truth, my risk would be much less than his. Thou knowest I have made many errands thither of late, concerning the houses which are being repaired in the market-place. No one will think it at all strange."

My mother shook her head, but both she and I knew that, once my father's mind was made up on a point of duty, there was no more to be said.

The day passed quietly and sadly enough, for we all felt it was probably the last day we should spend in the dear old house. Our preparations were all completed, even to filling the panniers of the spare donkey with the dried fruits and other matters which were to form our ostensible errand to Honfleur. As my father said, he had laid by a considerable amount of wealth in diamonds and other jewels, which, being of small bulk, could be easily concealed about our persons. We had also about three hundred louis in gold, which was divided between us. We dared take but very few clothes, and as for books or any treasures of that sort, they were of course quite out of the question.

I think none of us slept that night. I am sure I did not. It seemed to me as if I could not endure to lose sight for a moment of the things and places I was so soon to leave forever. At daylight my father called us all together, and for the last time we joined in prayer about that family altar which was so soon to be laid in ruins, never to be builded in that place again. But why should I say so? Never is a long day. Perhaps some time, in the councils of heaven, that altar may be once more erected.

We took our breakfast together very silently, and then my father kissed us all and mounted his horse to go to Avranches, taking Andrew with him. My mother called all the servants and paid them their wages, with a little present into the bargain. I believe the good souls had an idea of what was going to happen, though none of them said a word. It was a weary day, for we had done everything we could think of by way of precaution, and the time hung heavy on our hands. My father was to have returned by three o'clock, but the hour struck and he did not come. Alas, never again!

I had gone down to the gate for the tenth time to look for them, when, as I opened the little wicket, I met Pierre Le Febre face to face.

"Thank the holy archangel," said he breathlessly. "I was wondering how I should get speech of you, mademoiselle. But let me come in, for I have somewhat to say."

I let him into the courtyard, and called my mother to hear Pierre's tale.

"I was standing by the great gate of the hospital, as they call it," said he. "I had sold my fish to the Sisters, and was waiting for my money when the wicket suddenly opened and Lucille Sablot looked out. Ah, madame, how changed! But, as I said, she looked out, and, seeing no one, she put this little packet into my hand.

"'Quick, Pierre, if ever you cared for me,' said she. 'This for Mamselle Vevette, and make haste. Life and death are in thy steps. Tell Vevette I dared not write, but she will know what this means by the English name.' Then she drew in her head, and I heard some one scolding her within for looking out of bounds."

Breathlessly I opened the paper. There was nothing in it but a *grosse mouche*, what in English we call a bluebottle.

"A fly," said I. "Fly! That is what it means, maman. Lucille has sent us a warning. She knows of some danger that threatens us immediately. What shall we do?"

"Oh, if your father were but here!" said my mother, wringing her hands convulsively.

"Here he comes," said I, and at that moment appeared, not my father, but Andrew, riding across the fields at break-neck speed, his horse covered with foam. He sprang to the ground, flinging his reins loose anyhow.

"Armand! my husband!" said my mother. "Where is he?"

"To the tower first, aunt, then I will tell you all. Pierre, if ever he or I did you a good turn, do me one now!" said Andrew sharply. "I do not ask you to risk yourself, but let me have your boat. The wind is fair. We must run for

Jersey as soon as it is a little later. Go, and get it ready."

"My boat does not go without me, monsieur," said Pierre. "I can bring it back, and if I am out two or three days I am kept by the wind. You can never manage it alone; you do not know the channels, and I do."

"As you will; but have it ready by ten this night. It will be very dark, but so much the better. Run, now. Come, aunt, for Heaven's sake, for your child's sake." For maman stood like a marble statue.

"I will not move till you tell me news of Armand," said she.

"He is with God," answered Andrew, with a convulsed face. "His last words were, 'Tell Margaret to escape, for my sake, and the child's. We shall meet again.'"

"True, we shall meet again. It is but a short parting," said my mother musingly. Then, as Andrew stamped his foot with impatience, she seemed to rouse herself. "I am ready, my dear son. What shall we do?"

"Go, you and Vevette, and put on your peasant dresses, and secure the money and jewels, while I warn the servants. I want them to find an empty nest. Stay in your room till I come."

We obeyed at once. My mother was pale as ashes, but calm, and even cheerful. As to myself, I believe I retained only one rational thought at that moment—to do as I was bid. We changed our dresses and made our other arrangements with the speed of thought, but we had hardly finished before the noise of voices and clapping of doors told that the alarm had been given. In another moment Andrew appeared.

"I have told them that the mob are coming, and that their ladies have already escaped. I have bid them take to the woods for the night. Come, now! Leave everything in all the confusion possible to look like a hasty flight. It will all the better throw them off the scent."

We entered the secret passage, and closing it securely after us we sought the upper floor of the tower—not, however, the uppermost one, but the second.

"Do you know the way, Andrew?" I asked. "My father said these floors were not safe."

"They are safe enough for us, but our enemies will not find them very safe," was Andrew's response. "Step lightly, and follow me exactly."

We went around the side of the room to a cupboard with shelves, masking a door so entirely that no one would have known it was there. This door opened into a second and much smaller room, which again opened upon the staircase up which I had led the preacher.

"We can take breath now," said he. "We need not seek the vaults till we hear them approaching, and not then unless they come into this tower."

"They will come," said I. "Remember the staircase from the gallery."

"Let them," was Andrew's grim reply. "There are a few secrets about this place which even you do not know, Vevette." As he spoke he stooped down, drew out two large iron bolts and laid them on the floor. "The trap is set and baited," said he; "now let the rats walk in whenever they please."

"But how—how was it," I asked in a whisper, for my mother never said a word. The fact that my father was dead seemed enough for her.

"We had hardly reached Avranches when we heard the uproar in the market-place," returned Andrew. "At first we did not think of the cause, but as soon as we caught sight of the place we saw what was going on. They were pulling down the houses of the Protestants, and dragging out the women and the little children." Andrew shuddered and covered his face. "I saw one man in a friar's gown take two little baby girls in his arms and try to carry them out of the press, but they were torn from him. Then they caught sight of us, and one cried out, 'There is the arch heretic. There is the man who shelters the preachers.' And a volley of stones flew about our ears. We turned to fly, as there was clearly nothing else to be done, but a man named Michaud—I don't know whether you know him—"

"My father saved him from the galleys," said I.

"Well, he raised his arquebuse and deliberately fired at my uncle, wounding him in the breast. He did not fall nor lose his presence of mind, and by lanes and by-ways we gained the wood. Then he sank to the ground, and I saw that he was dying. 'Lose no time with me,' said he faintly. 'Hasten home at once. Did we not hear them cry, "To the tower!" Remember the secret passage. Hide as long as you can, if you cannot get away. Go not by the road, but across the heath. Why do you stay?' But I did not leave him till he had breathed his last. Then I drew his body aside into the bushes, and hastened hither."

"And do you think they will come?" I asked, as soon as I could speak.

"I most surely do," he answered. "The hope of plunder would bring the rascals, of whom there are abundance. The priest sets on the zealots and others join because they are afraid of being suspected of favoring the cause."

We sat in silence for what seemed a very long time, till the great clock struck eight. At that very moment we heard a shout and the trampling of many feet, while a strong glare shone through the little grated casement of the room.

"There they are," said Andrew, stepping to the window. I followed him and looked out. On they came, a mob of ruffians and abandoned women, with many, too, of whom I should have hoped better things. Heading the press was one of the curés of Avranches, a man whose openly dissolute life was a scandal to his own people. There were also two or three friars, among them the one who had visited us the day before.

"Ah, the traitor!" said I. "My father's old companion in arms, and but yesterday eating his bread."

"I believe you do him injustice," said my mother, in as calm a tone as if she were speaking of the most ordinary matter. "He has come in the hope of rendering us some service. Poor, miserable, deluded people!"

"I would I had some charges of grapeshot for these poor people," said Andrew. "They would go farther to dispel their illusions than a deal of reasoning. Anything but hiding like rats in a hole. But we have no choice. Not a word or sound, for your lives. But what is here?"

It was something which in my excited state almost sent me off into a hysterical laugh—namely, my great, long-haired, white cat Blanchon, which had followed us into the tower, and now mounted upon the window-seat was growling savagely at the intruders. He was an odd creature, very fond of his friends, but formidable to his enemies, and he had this peculiarity, that he never mewed. A strange yell, which sounded like that of a human being in the wildest rage, when he flew upon his enemies, and a loud purr were all the noises he ever made.

"Let him be. He will do no harm," said I. "He never makes any noise. What shall we do now?" as the mob made their onslaught on the gates with a savage yell which made me shudder.

"Keep quiet," was the reply. "We are safe enough unless they set fire to the tower."

In another moment the gate yielded, and the people poured in. Before one could speak they were all over the house, calling to each other and venting their rage at finding no one by breaking and destroying all before them.

"To the old tower, comrades!" finally cried a voice. "There is the hiding-place."

I suppose numbers gave the people courage, for I am certain not one of them would have dared invade the domain of the white chevalier alone. We heard the rush up the stairs and then the battering down of the door. Then there was a short pause.

"Come on," cried the same voice, which I now recognized as that of Michaud, our old gamekeeper, whom my father had saved only to be murdered by him. "Come on. Who cares for ghost or devil?"

There was a rush into the room, then a cry from those nearest the door. "Take care! The floor!" But it was too late. The loosened boards gave way, and down went a dozen men, Michaud among them, through a yawning gulf clear to the ground floor.

"Back! back! The tower is falling!" was the cry, while the shrieks of the men below added to the confusion. The tower was at once deserted, and we presently heard sounds which told us that the fallen men were being rescued from amid the ruins of the floor.

"To the cellars!" cried now the voice of Pierre

Le Febre. "Let us taste the old chevalier's wine and brandy."

"Good, Pierre!" said Andrew. "Once let them get among the casks and bottles, and we are safe."

"If Pierre does not get among them himself," said I.

"I do not believe he will, and in any case we have the boat. But it is time we were stirring. Aunt, can you walk?"

"Oh, yes! I can do anything you wish," answered my mother, in the same calm way. She seemed to have all her wits about her, but she did not speak unless we spoke to her.

"Come, then," and he opened the door of the secret passage into which pussy led the way, majestically waving his tail and looking back as if to say, "Come on, and fear nothing! You are under *my* protection." I remember smiling, in all my grief and anxiety, at his air of patronage. I went first, after I had lighted the lantern, then came my mother, and lastly Andrew. We heard only distant and muffled sounds, and judged that the people were busied in the cellar, where was stored not only wine and liquor, but abundance of old cider, strong as brandy itself.

We had just reached the level of the chapel and were about passing the door which led into it, when Blanchon the cat stopped, growling fiercely. In another moment a light shone through the opened door. The next Blanchon sprang forward with his wild, unearthly yell of onset, and flung himself into the face of a man who had just put his head through the opening. There was a scream of quite another character, and the man fled stumbling and falling on his way out, while Blanchon came back to us with the loud purr, which was his way of expressing complacency.

"Good cat," said Andrew. "*That* man won't find his way back in a hurry, but some one else may. Hold up the light, Yevette."

I held up the light while Andrew pulled to the door and with a stone smashed the spring-lock.

"Nobody will open that, even if any one dares try," said he. "Now for all the haste we can make."

I caught up Blanchon and carried him, to which he made no objection. We were soon in the open air, and walking quickly down the course of the stream which had scooped out the valley, we found ourselves in the little hamlet. It seemed to be deserted. Not a man was to be seen, nor a light, save in Isabeau's cottage. The night had grown wild and stormy, but it was not very dark. And we could see the mast of the boat, which lay at the end of the little pier.

"Now if Pierre has been true," said Andrew, and at that moment we heard his voice.

"Monsieur and madame, is that you? All is ready; but we shall have a wild night."

"Never mind, so long as the wind is fair," returned Andrew, in the same whisper. "I would rather face the sea than the devils we have left behind."

We were assisted into the boat, I holding fast to my cat, and set sail. I can give little account of the voyage. I know it was a rough and tempestuous one, and that we were many times in the greatest danger from the rocks and counter currents which make navigation in those parts so difficult. Andrew had the helm most of the time, while Pierre, whose smuggling and other lawless exploits had made him well acquainted with the channel, directed our course. My mother sat quite still under the half-deck of the boat, and I dozed by fits, with Blanchon in my lap, who now and then uttered a peevish growl, as he vainly tried to lick himself dry.

"There comes the morning at last," said Le Febre joyously; "and here is the blessed St. Aubin's bay spread out before us, if we can but get into it. I would we had a better pilot than myself."

"Yonder comes a boat which has been out all night," said Andrew. And he stood up and hailed her in English,

"Boat ahoy!"

"Hilloa!" came back, as the stranger rapidly overhauled us. "Who are you?"

"English," was the answer. "We have ladies on board. Where are you bound?"

"To St. Aubin's," was the reply. "Follow us, and you will do well enough."

"Good !" said Andrew to my mother. "We shall land close at home. And now that we are comparatively safe, tell me, Pierre, did I not hear your voice at the tower last night ?"

"You did, monsieur," was the reply. "I had a mind to see what was going on, for I knew I would get back in time, and without being missed. It was I who put the rascals up to break into the cellars. The priest tried to draw them away after him to search the old chapel, but he did not know his men so well as I did. Then, when I saw them well engaged, I took to my heels and reached the pier before you, not having so far to go, or knowing the way better. But where were you when the floors fell ? I trembled for you then."

"We were safe enough, and not far off," was the reply. "Was any one much hurt ?"

"Yes ; Michaud will die, and a good riddance too. There were some broken heads and bones ; I don't know how many. But, monsieur, what could have been in the chapel which handled the priest so terribly. I found him in the court blinded in both eyes and his face torn to pieces as by a wild beast, and he said something sprang at him in the old chapel. Could it have been that devil of a white chevalier, think you ? Could a ghost handle a man like that ?"

"I do not know whether or no ghosts can scratch," answered Andrew gravely ; "but the one who attacked the priest has been a passenger with us." And he raised my cloak and showed Blanchon, who had abandoned the attempt to keep himself dry, and lay a wet and sulky heap in my lap. Pierre's face fell.

"A white cat," said he. "If I had known we had a white cat on board I should have given up in despair a dozen times. However, all is well that ends well," he added, brightening up; "and here we come sure enough."

"And yonder is your cousin's house, Vevette," said Andrew, pointing to a comfortable-looking mansion not far away. "We shall soon be under a roof once more."

The family of the fisherman whose boat had preceded us were gathered at the landing to see us come in, and loud were their exclamations of wonder and pity as my mother and myself were assisted from our cramped position in the bottom of the boat to the landing-place. By one of the boys Andrew sent a message up to the house, and in what seemed a wonderfully short time we were surrounded and conveyed to the mansion Andrew had pointed out, by a troop of excited boys and girls, under the leadership of an elderly considerate man-servant. Here we were warmly welcomed, kissed, fed with hot soup and mulled wine, and finally put to bed in the most fluffy of feather-beds, my mother and myself in adjoining rooms. Maman was still in the same curiously passive state, but not unconscious.

"Go to rest, my Vevette," she said, kissing me as I hung over her. "Have no fears for me. I shall do well. Thank God that you are in safety. Ah, if thy father were but here !" and for the first time she burst into tears.

"That is well, my love," said my oldest cousin, to whom I looked in anxiety. "These tears will relieve your mother, and she will sleep, and all the better if she knows you are at rest. Go, my child."

I was used to obey, and my kind motherly cousin inspired confidence by her very tone. I undressed, put on the dry warm flannels provided for me, and crept into the bed, on which Blanchon was already established. Oh, the delicious depths of that English bed ! I thought I should lie awake to listen to the sounds from the next room, but I was worn out, and fell asleep before my head was fairly on the pillow.

CHAPTER IX.

IN JERSEY.

I SLEPT till afternoon, and when I waked I could not at first tell where I was, everything about me was so utterly different from anything I had been used to. My bed was surrounded by light curtains of blue and white checked linen, and through these at the foot I could see that the hangings of the latticed window were of the same. The bed was covered with a white spread worked with a curious pattern in colored crewels. Everything was very quiet, but I could hear the distant hum of a spinning-wheel, and the singing of a robin outside my window. I lay quietly a long time, half asleep and dreaming, half bewildered, feeling as if I had died and wakened into a new world, of which all I knew was that it was safe and friendly. At last I raised myself, put aside the curtain, and looked out. The room was small, very little larger than the one I had inhabited—oh, how long ago—but it was very different. The window was not a mere slit almost lost in the thickness of the wall, but a peaceful lattice, broad and low, into which, late as it was, looked a cluster of noisette roses. The floor was of boards intsead of tiles, and covered here and there with rugs, evidently of home construction. A little table stood at the head of the bed, on which were placed a bright brass candlestick, a Bible and prayer-book, and a little cup of flowers, and a shelf on the wall held a slender row of volumes. On an arm-chair near the bed was laid a change of clean linen, and beside it a mourning frock. The sight of that black frock brought back to my mind all that had passed in the last twenty-four hours. I had been through so much, and the need of action had been so instant, that I had had no time, as it were, to feel what I had lost, but now it came upon me in one moment. My father was dead—murdered by the very man whom he had saved from the effects of what he believed to be a false accusation. His body lay unburied at this moment, a prey to wild animals or more savage men. My mother and myself were exiles in a strange land, never again to see the home where I had grown up, and where I had lived so happily, in spite of uncertainty and danger.

"Oh, if my father were but here I would not care for anything else!" I sobbed, and covering my head I wept till I was exhausted, and once more I fell asleep.

I was waked by some one who came very softly into the room bearing a shaded light, and I started up in alarm.

"What has happened?" I asked, only half

awake. "Have I been asleep? Has not my father come home?"

"It is I, my love—Cousin Marianne," said the new-comer in a soft, lady-like voice. "Do not be frightened. All is safe. Your mother is awake, and I thought perhaps you would like to rise and take some refreshment with her."

"Is it very late?" I asked, still bewildered. "Has neither my father nor Andrew come back?"

"Recollect yourself, dear child," said my cousin, setting down her light and coming to the bedside. "Do you not remember what has happened?"

"Oh, yes, I remember!" said I, and my tears flowed again. My cousin sat down on the bedside, laid my head on her shoulder, and wept with me for a while. Then she began gently to soothe and hush me, and by degrees I grew composed, so that when she again proposed to me to try to rise I was quite ready to comply. She assisted me to dress, but looked a little displeased when she saw the black gown.

"That was thoughtless of Katherine," said she. "We are wearing mourning ourselves, but she might have got out a colored frock for to-day."

"It does not signify," said I. "I must put on black, of course. How is my mother, madame?"

"She seems well in health, and very quiet and composed," was the answer; "but I have persuaded her to remain in her room, for I am sure she must need rest after the events of yesterday and last night."

"Yesterday!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible that it was only yesterday morning that I saw my father and Andrew set out from our gate to go to Avranches?"

"So I understand from Andrew," was the reply. "I dare say it seems an age to you. My love, how curly your hair is."

"It curls worse than usual because it has been wet," said I, almost laughing at the odd transition. "Maman says it is real Corbet hair."

"Yes, you are like your mother's family, all but the complexion. Here is a fresh cap for you. They say that in London young ladies do not wear caps, but I cannot think that a modest custom. There, now, you look like an English maiden, and a very sweet one," said the dear old lady, kissing me, and then holding me off and regarding me with great satisfaction, much as if I had been a doll she had just dressed. "Now I will let you go in to your mother, as I dare say she would rather see you alone just at first. The next door to this on the right hand, remember. I will go down and send up your supper presently, and you must try to make dear mamma eat something." And Cousin Marianne glided away with that peculiar swift, short step of hers, which never seemed to make any noise even on a tiled floor. I never saw any one else move in the same way or get over so much ground in the same time.

It was with a feeling of awe that I opened my mother's door. She was up and dressed, and lay back in a great chair, with her little worn prayer-book in her hand. I now remembered seeing her slip it into her bosom when we changed our dresses in such a hurry. She held out her arms to me, and I fell into them weeping; but she did not weep, and I never saw her shed a tear but once afterward. Seeing how calm she was, I tried to quiet myself, and succeeded. Then she read to me that prayer in the Litany which begins, "O God, Merciful Father," and then for a while we were silent.

"Do you feel quite well, my Vevette?" she asked at last.

"Yes, dear maman, only tired," I answered truly; for though my head was a little inclined to be giddy, and I had an odd feeling of bewilderment, as though I were some one beside myself, I had no pain. "Why do you ask?"

"Your eyes are heavy, and your cheeks more flushed than usual; that is all."

"And you, maman?"

"I am quite well, my love, only weary, as you say. Have you seen any of the family?"

"No, maman; only that kind, gentle old lady. She called herself my Cousin Marianne. Who is she?"

"She is your cousin, as she said—the sister of Mr. George Corbet, the rector of this parish, and whose household she has governed since his wife died. A better woman never lived, nor one on whom advancing years made less impression. We have fallen among kind friends in our exile, my Vevette, and we must take care to show that we appreciate their kindness. You will find your cousins' ways quite different from anything you have been used to ; but do not fall into the common error of thinking that therefore those ways must be wrong. Even if they should laugh at you, take it in good part and laugh with them."

"I do not feel as if I should ever have the heart to laugh again," said I, sighing.

"Ah, my dear one, you are young, and youth is elastic. Your father would not wish to have all your life wrapped in gloom because he hath been so early and so easily removed to his eternal rest. But oh, my child, if you are ever tempted to sin against your own soul by denying your religion, remember it was for that your father laid down his life."

"I will *never* deny my religion !" said I almost indignantly.

"I trust not ; but no one knows how he maybe tempted. There are other inducements besides that of escaping persecution. The smiles of the world are far more dangerous to natures like yours than its frowns, and more than one of our religion has given up to blandishments and to ambition what he would never have yielded to the rack. Your father was attacked on this side many a time, with promises of high command, of court favor, and kingly grace, but he never yielded an inch—no, not, as I believe, in his inmost thoughts. Remember it, my Vevette, and let his example be, next to your duty to Heaven, the guiding light of your life."

The entrance of Cousin Marianne, followed by a neat maid bearing a tray of good things, interrupted our conversation. With that gentle, noiseless quickness, which was one of her characteristics, she spread a little table with a clean white cloth and arranged thereon the tempting dishes she had caused to be prepared. She also set out two cups and saucers of delicate china-ware—such as David had once brought to my mother from Dieppe. A signal dismissed the maid, who, however, presently returned carrying a small silver coffee-pot—the first one I had ever seen; for though coffee had come into quite common use in London and Paris, it had not yet penetrated to Normandy.

"I have made you a small pot of coffee, cousin," said she. "My brother learned to like it in London, and though I do not approve of its constant use, yet tempered with cream it is refreshing and wholesome when one is weak or tired. Now I shall leave you to wait upon yourselves, and do try to eat. It will be hard, I dare say, but you will be the better for it."

"Why does Cousin Marianne make one think of poor Grace?" said I. "She is not in the least like her."

"It is the Cornish accent," said my mother. "Grace always retained it, and so does our cousin, though she has lived so long abroad. But, my child, you do not eat a mouthful. Are you not hungry?"

"I thought I was," I answered; "but somehow I do not wish to eat now the food is before me. But I like the coffee," I added, sipping it with great satisfaction. "Do you not think it is good, maman?"

"Very pleasant indeed. I have tasted it before when it was a new thing even in London; but you must not drink much of it without eating, or it will keep you awake. Take one of these saffron-cakes. They are like Mrs. Grace's."

I tried to eat to please my mother, but with all my efforts I did not succeed very well. Whether owing to the coffee or because I had slept so much during the day, I cannot say, but I passed great part of the night lying broad awake and going over and over again, even to the minutest circumstance, the events of my life. They seemed to pass before me in endless succession, from the very earliest things I could remember in Jeanne Sablot's cottage, and that without any volition of my own, so that it was as if some one unfolded before me a set of pictures, and I lay and looked at them. When at last I fell asleep it was to be tormented by poor Lucille's messenger, the bluebottle fly, which kept buzzing round my head, saying something which I could not understand, though it was of the last importance that I should do so. Then I was being built up by my father and Andrew in one of the niches in the sepulchral vault, while I struggled in vain to tell them that I was not dead. Oh, how glad I was to wake at last and see the cheerful sun just darting his first beams into my casement! I abandoned the attempt to sleep, and rising I dressed myself quickly and softly, for I was possessed by an overmastering desire to get into the open air. I slipped down the stairs, admiring the beautiful neatness of the house, the brightness of the glass and the furniture, and the general air of comfort. The door of a sort of little parlor was open, and I peeped in. The walls were hung with brown hollands worked prettily in colored wools with leafy and flowery designs, and an unfinished piece of the same kind of embroidery in a great swinging frame stood by a window. There was an old-fashioned East Country cabinet, such as I had never seen at that time, a good many books, or what looked a good many to me, a lute and a pair of virginals—an instrument I had never beheld before, with a pile of music-books. A sash door opened from this room to a terrace, and seeing that it was only fastened by an inside latch I ventured to open it and step out. The house stood somewhat high upon the hill-side, overlooking first a sloping grass-plot and flower-garden, where late blossoms still lingered, which had faded on the mainland long ago. Below was an odd pretty little old church, all surrounded by a green graveyard full of mouldering stones. Beyond were the sands of the bay, over which the tides were coming up in that peculiar boiling, swirling fashion which belongs to tides about the islands, and still beyond were wooded abrupt slopes. On the top of these I could see a single farm-house, from whose chimney rose a tall, thin column of blue smoke touched into a rosy glory at the top by the rays of the low sun. Nobody seemed to be stirring. Two or three fishing-boats were anchored off shore, and a few skiffs were drawn up on the beach. A very distant church bell was ringing and a few birds pecking and chirping about the hedges; but these sounds, with the rush of the advancing tide, seemed only to render the stillness more tranquil.

I stood and gazed like one entranced, till I heard steps approaching, and looking about I saw Andrew for the first time since we landed at the little quay, where Le Febre's boat was still lying. I could not speak, but I held out my hand. He pressed it warmly and long, and we stood in silence, looking over the scene.

"You are up early," said I at last.

"I saw you from my window, and came to join you," he answered, and then asked, in a tone of concern, "Are you quite well, Vevette?"

"Yes, of course!" I answered pettishly. "I can't think why every one should ask me whether I am well."

"Because you do not look so," he answered. "But that is no wonder, considering—" and then he broke off and was silent again.

"How beautiful everything is, and how peaceful!" said I at last. "Do you know it seems so strange to me to think that we are safe. I can hardly believe it."

"It is hard to believe it, even to me, to whom safety comes natural," he answered. "I can scarcely think that yonder is a Protestant church, where all the village will presently assemble to worship, and that my cousin will preach, and say just what he pleases about the mass or anything else."

"Is my cousin the minister?" I asked.

"Yes, the rector, as we call him here. It is but a poor cure, but Mr. Corbet has property of his own. Have you seen any of your cousins yet?"

"Only Cousin Marianne, as she bade me call her. I think she is charming. Is she a widow?"

"No, she has never married."

"Why was that?" I asked, surprised.

"Because she did not choose, I fancy," replied Andrew, smiling. "In England, my cousin, women do not have to choose between a husband and the cloister. I have known more than one lady who has never married, but lived to be a blessing to all about her. Others, I am sorry to say, waste their time in miserable frivolity—in cards and dancing and dress."

"A woman who would live like that when single would most likely do the same if she were married," said I sagely. "And then her family would have to suffer. But I must go back to the house. Maman will wake and miss me."

"And here comes Eleanor to call us," said Andrew. "Dear good Eleanor. She is not as bright as the rest, but I am sure you will like her."

Eleanor came forward, and shook hands with me cordially enough. She was pretty and fresh-colored, but I noticed in a moment that her cap was awry, and her fresh lawn apron already creased and tumbled. Nevertheless, I took a fancy to her in a moment.

"Do you know whether my mother is up?" I asked, after we had exchanged some commonplace remarks.

"I think she is. I heard her moving," she said, and then asked abruptly, "Don't you want to carry her some flowers? I would have gathered them, but I thought you would like to do it yourself. There are plenty of late violets and rosebuds in the garden."

I was pleased with the idea, and with the odd kind of consideration it showed. We collected quite a nosegay, which I carried to my mother's room. I had acted as her maid and attendant of late, though I am sure I but poorly supplied the loss of poor Grace, and I was surprised to find her up and dressed.

"Oh, maman, I ought not to have stayed so long," said I; "but the morning is so beautiful, and I longed so to breathe the fresh air—" and then I stopped, and had much ado not to burst out crying again as I observed that my mother had put on a black dress and a long mourning veil after the fashion of widows in England. I checked myself, however, and put into her hand the flowers Eleanor had helped me to gather.

"Thank you, my love. They are very charming," said my mother, who loved flowers with a kind of passion. "But I fear you have been making too free with your cousin's garden."

"Oh, no, maman; Eleanor showed me where to gather them. It was her thought in the first place. See what beautiful rosebuds, for so late in the year. We have none such in Normandy. But I suppose our poor flower-garden is all trampled into the earth," I added, and then seeing that my mother's lips turned white, and that she grasped the back of the chair for support, I sprang forward, exclaiming, "Oh, dear maman, I beg your pardon. I did not mean to hurt you."

"There is no fault to be pardoned, my child," said my mother, recovering herself as by a great effort, and kissing me; "but, Vevette, I must be selfish enough for the present to ask you not to speak of—" Her lips turned pale again, and she seated herself in the chair. I bathed her face with some sweet waters which stood on the toilette-table, and she was soon herself, nor did she again allude to the subject. When she was quite recovered we said our morning prayers together, and read the Psalms for the day, as we had been used to do at home. We had but just finished when Cousin Marianne tapped at the door, which I opened.

"So you are both up; and I hear—my dear, what shall I call you?" said she, with one of her abrupt transitions. "That name of Genevieve does not suit an English girl, to my thinking."

"Call her Vevette," said my mother. "It is the name she has always gone by. Or you may call her by her first name, Agnes, if you like."

"Oh, my dear, Agnes is an unlucky name—at least for Cornish folks. Vevette answers nicely, though it does sound a little like a cat," she added reflectively. "However, it does not matter; and I am sure such a nice cat as that of yours is a credit to any family. Why, no sooner did it see me cutting some cold meat than it sat up upon its hind legs, and spread out one paw exactly like a Christian. But, my dear Margaret, will you join us at breakfast and family prayers? Do just as you please."

"We will come certainly," said my mother; and leaning upon my arm she descended to the parlor below—not the one I had been in before—where we found the whole family assembled, including my Cousin George, who came forward to meet us.

Of all men that ever I saw, Cousin George came the nearest to my idea of a clergyman, at least in appearance and manners. He was a tall, slender man, with curling hair as white as snow. His face had that hale, healthful red, like that of a winter apple, which is so beautiful in old age, and shone with a benignancy and purity that I cannot describe. It was the light within shining out which did so illumine his countenance, for a sweeter, more godly, and withal more kind and genial soul never inhabited a mortal tenement. There was nothing of the sour ascetic about Cousin George, though he could fast at proper times, and was self-denying by habit; but he loved to see and to promote innocent enjoyment. If ever any man fulfilled the command to rejoice with those that rejoiced, and weep with those that wept, he did, and he was equally at home at the bridal or in the house of mourning.

My other cousins all rose when we came in, and remained standing while their father greeted my mother with a tenderly spoken blessing, and led her to a seat by his side. They looked at us with a sort of reverence and awe, as young folks of any feeling are apt to do upon those who have just come through any great danger or affliction. There were five of them—three girls, and two little boys much younger. I found out afterward that the birth of these two twin boys cost the life of their mother.

As soon as we were seated, my Cousin George read the tenth chapter of St. Matthew. Then all together sang a version of the twenty-third Psalm:

"My shepherd is the living Lord,
Nothing therefore I need;
In pastures green near pleasant streams
He setteth me to feed."

Then my cousin read prayers. Nobody who has not been placed in like circumstances can guess how strange it seemed to me to be reading the holy Word and singing psalms with open windows and in absolute security. I saw the girls look at one another and smile, but by no means unkindly, when

I started nervously at a passing footstep outside. It all added to that bewilderment which had been stealing over me all the morning, and which seemed now and then to quite take away all knowledge of where I was or what I was doing.

The breakfast was very nice, with abundance of cream and new milk, fresh-laid eggs, and brown and white bread, but I could take nothing save a glass of milk, which I had hard work to dispose of. I saw them all look at me with concern, and again Cousin Marianne asked me whether I were ill.

"No, madame," I answered; "I am not ill at all." I caught a look of surprised reproof from my mother, and became aware that I had answered pettishly. "Indeed, I am not ill," I said more gently; "please do not think so." I suppose it was a part of the bewilderment of my head that I somehow felt annoyed and hurt that any one should think I was not well.

My cousins came round me after breakfast, and carried me off to the room I had seen in the morning.

"This is our own den," said Katherine, the elder sister. "To-morrow we will show you our books and work. The lute is Paulina's, and the virginals are mine. Eleanor does not play or sing at all."

"But she works very nicely," put in Paulina, the second sister, while Eleanor never spoke a word, but looked at me like a good dog, which says with his eyes what his tongue cannot utter; "and she can tell tales better than any of us when she is in the mood. Can you tell tales, Cousin Vevette?"

"I do not know, I am sure," I said. "I love to hear and read them. But what is that?" I asked, with a start, as the near church bell swung round and then rang out loudly. "Is it an alarm?"

"That is the church bell," said Paulina, with a little laugh. "How you start at everything. I noticed it when my father was reading."

"If you had been through what she has, you would start too," said Eleanor, speaking for the first time. "Can't you understand that, Paul? Will you go to church, cousin?"

"I don't believe she ought to go," said Katherine; "she looks so tired and overwrought."

"I would much rather go if maman is willing," said I.

There was some demur among the elders, but it was finally settled that I might do as I pleased, and I presently found myself walking with my cousins through a shady lane which led from the rectory to the church. Once inside the gates we found ourselves amid a throng of people, all well-dressed and comfortable-looking, and, as it seemed, all talking together in an odd kind of patois which was not English, and not any French that I was used to. However, by a little attention I understood the tongue well enough, and I found it not so very different from the Norman French spoken in La Manche.

There were a good many English people in church, and some whom I guessed to be French exiles, like ourselves. I saw Pierre Le Febre seated along with a decent-looking family of fisher-folks, and as I glanced at him from time to time I saw him listening with the greatest attention and an air of profound amazement, not to say alarm, which made me smile. The prayers and sermon were in the language of the island, but, as Katherine told me, the afternoon service was always in English.

I was still listening, as I thought, to my cousin's sermon, when to my great amazement I found myself in my little blue and white bed. It was toward evening, as I guessed by the light. My mother was bending over me, and Cousin Marianne with a strange gentleman were standing on the other side of the bed.

"There is a great improvement, madame," the stranger said in English. "I think I may say that with care there is nothing more to fear. But I cannot too strongly recommend absolute quiet and silence for the present."

"What does it mean, maman?" I said, finding my voice somehow very hard to get at, and very thin and tremulous when found. "I thought I was in church. Have I been ill?"

"Yes, my love. You were taken ill in church, and were brought home. Do not talk now. By and by you will understand all about it. Let me give you a little food and refresh your pillow, and then perhaps you will fall asleep again."

"I should like something to eat," said I. "I feel hungry, though I could not eat this morning."

My mother smiled sadly, and I saw Cousin Marianne suddenly turn away to the window almost as if she was crying. I wondered vaguely what she was crying about, but it did not disturb me. I took the cup of broth my mother held to my lips, and presently fell asleep again.

I lay in this state of childish weakness for many days and weeks, coming gradually to understand that I had been ill some time, though I had no notion how long the time was. The girls flitted in and out, and Eleanor often sat by me hours at a time, working away at her plain white seam. I liked to have her with me best of all. She never put on airs of bustle and authority like Katherine, who seemed to think that the only way to take care of a sick person was never to let that person do or have anything she wanted. Neither did she lean against the bed, or pat the floor with her foot, or talk of half a dozen things in a minute, like good little Paulina, who thought I needed to be enlivened and diverted. She just sat quietly, with her sewing, where I could see her without any trouble, and was always ready to wait on me and to save me the trouble of speaking by anticipating my wants. My mother said of her that she had the precious *nursing* talent, which is one of the best gifts ever bestowed on man or woman.

I lay quietly in my bed, as I said, very little troubled as to the lapse of time or anything else, taking what was given me, perfectly content so long as I had my mother or Eleanor by me. I learned afterward that this long-continued passiveness of mine was a source of great alarm to my friends, who feared that my mind was irretrievably injured by what I had gone through. However, such was not the case. The bow had been terribly strained, but not cracked, and by and by it recovered its elasticity. One morning I woke feeling much stronger, and very decidedly interested about what I was going to have to eat. The curtain was undrawn from the casement, and I raised myself on my elbow and looked out. Lo, the great willow was hung with catkins, and the hedgerow was budding. What did it mean?

My mother was resting, half asleep, in the great chair, but roused herself and came to the bedside as I moved.

"Maman, what time of year is it?" I asked.

Her lips moved, and I was sure she said "Thank God!" Then she answered gently,

"It is spring, my Vevette; the last of March."

"March!" I repeated wonderingly. "I thought it had been December. And what, then, has become of Christmas?"

"It has gone where all other Christmases have gone before it, no doubt," answered my mother, smiling. "It passed while you were so ill that I dared not leave you for a moment, and all the congregation on that day prayed for you. Do you not recollect anything of your illness?"

"No," I answered. "The last I recollect clearly was being in church listening to the sermon, and then waking in my room and hearing some one say I was better. But that was some days ago, was it not?"

"Some weeks," said my mother. "But do not talk any more now. Here comes our good Eleanor, with your breakfast. The dear child has been like an own daughter to me."

"I remember Eleanor," said I, taking her plump hand in my thin one and kissing it. "She has been here a good many times. But what are these flowers? Violets? They really are violets and primroses."

"I thought you would like them," said Eleanor; "but don't let your broth get cold while you look at them." And she would have fed me, but I took the spoon and helped myself.

"From this time my recovery was rapid. I was soon able to sit up by the window, and then to walk about the room, and at last I got down-stairs and out of doors. Every one was very kind to me, and I had only one trouble, over which I used to cry in secret sometimes. I had a ravenous appetite, and though I had half a dozen meals a day, they would not give me half as much as I wanted to eat.

* * *

CHAPTER X.

TO ENGLAND.

AS I said, my strength increased every day, so that I was soon able to walk about the garden and to take some long rides upon my cousin's gentle old pony, accompanied by Andrew and sometimes by Eleanor, to whom I still clung, though I was on the best of terms with the other girls. We sat together in the brown parlor, as it was called, with our work or our music. Katherine taught me to play the virginals and also the organ, on which she was no contemptible performer. I never saw a girl who could do so many different things so well; but she had some faults, one of which was that she did not know how to help. Whatever was going on she always wished to take the whole command, whether the scheme was her own or another person's. Paulina could give advice as to one's embroidery, modestly point out what she believed to be improvements, and after all be content that you should take your own way; but Kate always had some greatly better plan or pattern of her own, and was inclined to be offended if one did not adopt it. I observed that the little boys, though they were fond of Katherine, yet came to Paulina with their little manufactures of kites, etc., as well as with their lessons, and to Eleanor with their bruises, cut fingers, and little difficulties of all sorts. In return for their instructions I taught the girls to do English cut-work, to work lace, and to knit, of which accomplishments they were quite ignorant. Cousin Marianne was in and out, up-stairs and down, looking well to the ways of her household, keeping every part of the family in place and working smoothly, by using oil or a rasp, as the case might require. I never saw any one who better fulfilled the part of the wise woman of King Lemuel, except that she had no husband to be known in the gates (I always wondered what kind of woman King Lemuel married, after all his mother's instructions. I dare say she was some shiftless, helpless beauty, who could not mend her own hose, and did not know wheat from barley).

I must not forget to say that Pierre Le Febre returned to La Manche, having been well rewarded for his great services, which money alone would never pay for. He was not afraid to go back, as he had a plausible story enough to tell of contrary winds and the breaking of his boat, which was indeed a good deal damaged. But it seems he did not find himself comfortable. He fell under suspicion, notwithstanding all his precautions, and he was not well treated by his own family, who never forgave his marrying poor Isabeau. So one night he loaded his most valued possessions into his boat, along with his wife and child, and ran over to Jersey. He was hospitably received, on account of the great service he had done to my cousin's family, and he settled down into a respectable, steady father of a family, and became, for one in his station, quite a rich man. All this Eleanor wrote me long afterward. Andrew had always said that poor Le Febre had the making of a man in him, and the event showed he was right.

It was a delightful novelty to have comrades of my own age to work and play with, for, except poor Lucille, I had never had any girl friend. As the spring came on, as my strength increased and the island became more beautiful with every passing day, I grew more and more content, and should have been well pleased to make Jersey my home as long as I lived. But my mother's health, which seemed so well to have borne the strain of that terrible night and the fatigues of my long illness, now began to fail. She had feverish nights and a slight cough, which made Cousin Marianne look grave whenever she heard it; and she became restlessly anxious to go *home*, as she said—to see once more the house where she was born, and the places where she had wandered when a child.

"It may be an idle fancy," said she one day to Cousin Marianne; "but since I cannot share my husband's grave, I should like to lie beside my father and mother."

"You must not give up life for a bad business," said Cousin Marianne. "Wish and try to live for your daughter's sake."

"I should strive to live, if striving would do any good," said maman; "but my life is in better hands than mine. As to wishes, I believe I have none, unless it be this one—to see Cornwall once more."

"I should urge you to stay longer if I did not believe that your native air might do you good. I have some longings for a sight of that same Cornish home myself," she added, with a little gentle sadness in her voice. "It comes to me in my dreams at times, but I can never leave my cousin till one of the girls is old enough to govern the family, and by that time I fancy I shall be ready for a better home even than the old house at Tre Madoc."

Andrew, too, was anxious to depart. His ship was to sail in June, and he wished to see us in safety, and to spend a little time with his mother and sisters before setting out on his long voyage to the Indies, whither his ship was bound. So at last it was settled that we were to sail for England with the first good opportunity, spend a few days in London, to dispose of my mother's jewels to advantage, and then go by sea to Plymouth, from whence the land journey would be but short.

An opportunity was not long delayed, for a good merchant-ship, with whose captain Andrew was well acquainted, touched at the island, and as the accommodations were better than any we could have hoped for, we got ready and embarked without delay. I gave my white cat Blanchon to Eleanor. I grieved to part with him, for he seemed a link to my lost home, but I should not have known how to dispose of him in London, and Eleanor had grown very fond of him; so I was glad to do something for her in return for all her goodness to me. So Blanchon was left behind. I parted from my cousins with many tears. They are all living still, and the two elder ones in homes of their own; but Eleanor has never married, and now governs her elder brother's house, as my cousin Marianne did her father's.

Our voyage, though somewhat rough, was prosperous, and the morning of the third day found us in lodgings which Andrew had procured for us in a good situation. It was in one of the new streets which had been built upon the ground covered by the great fire, and was therefore clean in comparison with other parts of the town; but oh, how dingy and dirty and forlorn it all seemed to me! It is true, many of the buildings were very magnificent, and the equipages quite wonderful to my country eyes; but what did that matter when half the time one could not see them for the fog and the smoke of the sea-coal, a kind of fuel of which I knew nothing? I well remember my dismay when, on putting my hand on the banister in going down stairs, I found it as begrimed as a blacksmith's.

We remained in London about two weeks. My

Uncle Charles, my mother's brother, was out of town with his family when we first arrived, but he soon returned, and came at once to see us, with his wife. They were a very fine lady and gentleman indeed, and dressed in the extreme of the fashion. My aunt especially was quite wonderful to behold, with her great bush of false hair, almost white, which formed an odd contrast to her dark eyes and eyebrows. Her forehead and cheeks were spotted with patches in the form of crescents, stars, and what not, and she wore the richest of brocades with heaps of silver lace. She was a very pretty woman, and very good-natured as well, though rather affected. I admired her hugely, as the first specimen of a fine lady I had ever seen. They were very kind and attentive to us, and my aunt was earnest with my mother to remain with her, instead of going down into that barbarous Cornwall, as she called it.

"Meg does not think it a barbarous desert, you see," said my uncle, with some pique in his voice, I thought. "And as you have never seen it and she has, she is perhaps the better judge."

"But such a lonely place," said my lady, with a very little pout; "no society, no gentry! I should die of megrims in a week."

"Margaret will not die of megrims, I'll engage," said my uncle; "nor my niece here. Come here, child, and let us look at you. I protest, Margaret, she is a beauty. Leave her with us, if you will not remain yourself, and we will find her a good husband."

"Vevette's market is already made," said my mother, smiling, though I could see she was annoyed. "You know it was an old family compact that she is to marry her cousin Andrew, and both the young folks are well suited therewith."

"Andrew Corbet! Why, he is not even a captain, and the estate at Tre Madoc cannot be worth more than four hundred a year all told," said my uncle. "Besides, unless he abandons his profession the child will be a widow without any of the advantages of widowhood. There, I beg your pardon, Meg. I did not mean to hurt you."

My mother made no reply, but began to ask after other members of the family—the Stantons and Corbets of Devonshire.

"Oh, poor Walter is dead of the plague, and his young wife also! He married a girl young enough to be his daughter, and a great beauty, but neither of them lived long."

"I thought his wife was that Margaret Matou, who lived at the court with the former Lady Stanton," said my mother.

"Yes, she was his first wife, and a charming creature, I must say, though not handsome; but the second was quite different. However, she died, poor thing, and left no children, so the old house stands empty at present."

"There was a daughter, was there not?"

"Yes, she lives with Mr. Evelyn, her guardian, who is bringing her up in his strait-laced fashion."

"To be a companion to his pattern Mrs. Godolphin," said his wife, laughing.

"He might do worse," returned my uncle. "But come, sister D'Antin, make up your mind to leave your daughter with us for her education. I assure you she will have every care and advantage of masters, and we will make her a girl you shall be proud of."

My aunt seconded the invitation most kindly, but my mother was quite firm in declining it. We promised them a visit, however, to my secret delight. When Andrew came back from the navy office, whither he had been to report himself, and heard what had passed, his brow darkened, and he said anxiously,

"You will not surely think of it, aunt. You will not leave our Vevette here to be made a fine lady of?"

"Have no fear, Andrew," answered my mother. "Nothing is farther from my thoughts than to put my child into such hands. I would almost as soon have her in the hospital with poor Lucille."

"I am sure my uncle and aunt seem very kind," said I rather indignantly, and feeling somehow vexed that Andrew should say "*our* Vevette," though he had often done so before. I was quite dazzled, in truth, by the splendor of these new relations, who revived in some degree my old day-dreams.

"They are so in their way, but that way is not ours," said my mother; "and even were the advantages they offer greater than I think them, I do not believe my child would wish to leave her mother for their sake."

"Oh, no, no!" I cried, feeling for the moment all I said; "not for worlds."

"That is settled, then," said my mother. "And now tell us, Andrew, where have you been?"

Andrew told us he had been to the naval office, where he had met an old friend, Mr. Samuel Pepys, with whom, knowing him to be a man of honor and wise in such matters, he had taken counsel as to the sale of my mother's jewels. He said further that Mr. Pepys believed he could find a merchant who would give good value for the said jewels, and that the gentleman proposed to bring his wife to visit us on the morrow, if it would be agreeable.

"I must warn you not to judge him by the outside, for he is a vain little fellow in some ways," said Andrew, smiling; "but he is in truth a good man, and his wife is a bright little body."

Of course my mother could say no less than that we should esteem the visit an honor, and the next morning they came. I had thought my uncle's dress wonderful fine, but it was nothing to that of Mr. Pepys, though I must say the latter was both richer in itself and better fancied. His wife was a pretty, black woman, who spoke French very nicely, and indeed it was in some sort her native tongue. Mr. Pepys bought some of my mother's lesser jewels himself, especially a diamond in a clasp which his wife fancied, and promised to find a purchaser for the rest—a promise which he fulfilled to our great advantage. His conversation was an odd mixture of worldly shrewdness and an almost childlike simplicity, but I observed with approval that he did not load his discourse with oaths as my uncle, and even his wife, had done. On the whole I liked our new friends very well, and when he proposed to carry me out and show me something of the parks and the city, I looked to my mother rather anxiously for her approval. She made no objection ; so Mr. Pepys came by and by with his coach (which I fancy he had not possessed a great while, he seemed so proud of it), and took us into the park, and there showed us many great lords and ladies, pointing out to us, with a kind of awful reverence, my Lady Castlemain, and some other person of the same stamp. I saw my mother flush as with indignation as she said, half to herself,

" And it is in such a world as this that they would have me leave my child to be brought up !"

" You must not think, madame, that all the ladies about the court are like these," said Mr. Pepys. " There are many who bring up their families in all virtue and godly living, like my good Lady Sandwich and others I could name. But I am quite of your mind as to Mrs. Genevieve, and if I were so happy as to be blessed with a daughter, she should, if possible, grow up in the country. His Majesty is a most noble prince—Heaven bless him, with all my heart!—but his example in some things hath done our young people little good."

It seemed that the merchant to whom we hoped to dispose of our jewels was out of town, but as he was to return in a few days Andrew advised us to wait for him. Meantime, at their earnest entreaty, we spent a few days with my uncle and aunt. My mother indeed passed much of her time in her own apartment, which, as her widowhood was so recent, no one could decently object to; but I went out several times with my aunt to the park, and even to Whitehall, where I saw the king and queen, and many great people besides. It seemed that the king had heard something of our story; at all events he noticed me, and asking who I was, I was informally presented to him. There was less formality about the court at that time than ever has been before or since. He spoke kindly to me—for he was always kind when it cost him nothing—asked after my mother, and made me a compliment on my good looks. I noticed after this that my aunt was rather in a hurry to get me away, and she never took me thither again.

But the mischief was done. All my old day-dreams of wealth and ambition waked to life again, and I began to indulge them more and more. My conscience did not let me fall into my old courses without warning me, it is true; but I began to disregard its teachings, and to repine at the strict manner in which I had been brought up. I had grown very handsome since my illness, and I was quite aware of the fact—as what girl is not?—and when I was away from my mother's side and in my aunt's drawing-room I received many flourishing compliments, such as were then in fashion, from the gallants who visited her. I soon began to compare my good Andrew with these fine gentlemen, not at all to his advantage, and I wished, if it were my fate to marry him, that he had a more genteel figure, and knew better how to set himself off. My aunt and uncle did not scruple to say before me that it was a shame I should so so sacrificed—sent down to the country to be brought up by a set of Puritans, and married to another, without any chance to raise myself by a good match, as I might easily do.

"'Tis a poor thing for Andrew, too," I heard my uncle say one day; "he ought to marry some rich merchant's daughter, and renew his estate."

"Why do you not tell him so?" asked my aunt. "There is Mrs. Mary Bakewell, who would jump at the chance of making herself a lady with her thousands. Truly, she is plain enough, and something the elder, but she is a good creature after all. Why not propose it to him?"

"I did," replied my uncle, laughing; "and you should have seen him. He treated me to a real Cornish thunder-gust."

"Why, what did he say?" asked my aunt, while I listened with all my ears, as we say.

"He said he would rather travel the country with an ass and panniers, selling sand to the old wives, than sell his manhood for a fortune. I said the lady was a good lady, and well nurtured, and he answered, ' So much the worse,' and then added, ' You mean kindly, I dare say, and I thank you, but I am old-fashioned enough to desire to love my wife.' "

" He *is* a rustic, without doubt," returned my lady, with a little touch of sarcasm in her voice. " I think you may as well let matters stand as they are, Charles. You will gain nothing by meddling, and 'tis but a thankless office, educating of other people's children."

" I believe you may be right," said my uncle, " and yet I confess I should like to keep the girl."

My aunt made no reply, and the conversation was dropped. I must say I looked on Andrew with a good deal more favor after this. It was something to have a servant (that was the fine phrase at that time) who had refused a great match for my sake.

Our visit at my uncle's was cut rather short from two circumstances, I fancy. One was that he was displeased my mother should have taken Mr. Pepys' advice about selling her jewels. My lady herself had a fancy for these same jewels, and would have bought them on credit, which we could ill afford; besides which my mother told Andrew and me that it was not well to have money transactions between near relatives.

" They are sure to lead to misunderstanding and coldness, if not to open rupture," said she. " Moreover, from what I have seen I believe my brother to be already embarrassed with debts."

"I know it for a fact," said Andrew; "and I believe you have done wisely. Mr. Bakewell is now returned, and is ready to treat with you for the jewels at any time."

"Then we will finish the affair as soon as may be, that we may turn our faces homeward," replied my mother. "I long for the sight of green trees and running streams, and, above all, for a cup of cold water from St. Monica's well. I can see it now, bubbling up under the ruined arch," she added musingly, with that far-away look which had lately come to her eyes. "Some day, Andrew, you must restore that arch."

"I will," said Andrew, with a certain solemnity, and they were both silent a moment. Then he added, more cheerfully, "Then I will tell the good woman at our lodgings that you will return to-morrow."

"This afternoon," said my mother; and so it was settled.

I believe another reason why my mother was willing to cut her visit short was that she saw the influence my aunt and her way were beginning to have upon me. I shall never forget how she looked at me when, in some fit of impatience with my work, I gave vent to one of my aunt's modish oaths. Those of the Religion in France looked upon all such expressions with as much abhorrence as the Puritans of England or America.

"Genevieve," said she sternly, "what would your father say?"

"I did not mean anything," said I, abashed and vexed at the same time.

"And there is just the fault," returned my mother. "Against what is the commandment aimed, if not at the use of sacred names without meaning anything?"

I did not reply, of course, and I was more careful in future, but inwardly I murmured at my mother's strictness and Puritanism, as I called it. I had learned this phrase from my uncle and his friends, with whom everything serious or reverent was Puritanism.

I should have said that I went to church on Sunday with my uncle and aunt. I was quite amazed at the splendor of the church, which had recently been refitted, and delighted with the service, especially with the chanting and singing. The sermon also I thought very good, though I did not quite like the preacher's manner. But if I was pleased with the clergyman, I was horrified at the manners of the congregation. I saw the fine ladies and gentlemen bowing and courtesying to each other, whispering—nay, all but talking aloud—and passing snuff-boxes and smelling-bottles back and forth. One of the gentlemen I had seen at my aunt's the day before bowed to me as he came in, but I looked the other way.

"What a *gracey* sermon—just like a Presbyterian," said my aunt, yawning, without any disguise, almost before the congregation was dismissed. "And why did you not courtesy when Mr. Butler bowed to you? Did you not see him?"

Then I made one of the great mistakes of my life. I yielded to that miserable shame of doing right, which is the undoing of so many, and answered, "I was looking another way."

"Oh, I thought perhaps it was against your principles," said my aunt, in that light tone of contempt which always stung me to the quick. "I know some of our Puritans will not acknowledge a salute in church. I don't believe my old Lady Crewe would return a bow from the king himself, if prayers had begun."

"Yes, she is true to her colors," said my uncle. "I like her the better for it too," and he sighed a little. I heard afterward that he had been a great precisian in the days of the Protector, though, like many others of the same sort, he went to the other extreme now. Their fear of God, like mine own, was taught by the precept of men, and therefore was easily enough overthrown by the same.

"But you must have your wits about you, child," said my aunt. "'Tis a dreadfully uncivil thing not to return a salute. Mr. Butler will think you a little rustic."

I am ashamed to say that I was more troubled at the thought that Mr. Butler should think me a rustic than at the lie I had told. When I came to my mother, she asked me of the sermon, and I told her all I could remember.

"'Tis a great privilege to hear the blessed Word preached openly to all the people," said my mother, sighing a little.

"'Tis a privilege a good many do not seem to appreciate," said Andrew, who had come in as usual to see my mother; "you should see the king and countess at church, madame. The Duke of York spent the whole of sermon-time this morning talking and laughing with some painted madams or other, through the curtains of the pews. If my cousin had been the preacher, I believe he would have spoken to them before all the congregation. What can you expect when our rulers set such an example?"

"What did the king do?" I asked.

"He was more attentive to the preacher. He is not one to hurt any one's feelings by incivility, though he would not care for his going to the rack, so he did not see it."

"Hush, my son!" said my mother reprovingly. "'Tis a besetting sin of yours to speak evil of dignities."

Andrew shrugged his shoulders, but he had too much respect to answer my mother back again.

But I am going back in my story. That very afternoon we returned to our lodgings. Our friends took leave of us cordially enough, and my aunt made me several very pretty presents, especially of a pocket working equipage, containing scissors, needles, thimble, and other implements, beautifully wrought, and packed in a very small compass.

Besides these she gave me a volume of plays and poems, which last, I am ashamed to say, I did not show to my mother. My mother presented her with a handsome clasp of Turkey stones and pearls, and my uncle with a gold snuff-box, which had belonged to her husband's father, and had a picture of some reigning beauty—I forget whom—enamelled on the lid ; so we all parted friends.

The next day being Sunday we went to a French Protestant church, where the worship was carried on according to the forms used by us in our own country. There had been an attempt made in the days of Charles the First to compel the French Protestants to conform to the Church of England, but it had not been carried out in the present reign. Great numbers of the refugees did in fact conform to the church, and indeed take orders therein, not considering the differences as essential ; but others preferred the ways they were used to, and these had chapels of their own. It was to one of these churches, in Threadneedle Street, that we went ; and here a great surprise awaited us.

We were no sooner seated than I began to have that feeling we have all experienced, that some one was looking earnestly at me, and turning my head about I saw in the gallery Simon and Jeanne Sablot. I could hardly believe my eyes ; but there they were, decent as usual, though poorly dressed enough, and sadly changed since I had seen them last. Simon's hair was white as snow, and Jeanne's ruddy cheeks were faded and sunken. They both smiled, and then Jeanne's face was buried in her hands and her frame shaken with sobs. I had no time to direct my mother's attention to them, for the minister at that moment entered the desk and the service began. Here was no whispering, no exchange of salutes or snuff-boxes. Many of those before the preacher had but just escaped from their enemies, thankful to have their lives given them for a prey, as the prophet says ; and it was to them a wonderful thing to attend upon their worship openly and in safety. It was not the regular minister who preached, but one who had but lately escaped from the house of bondage, and was able to give us the latest account of the unhappy country we had left behind. It was a sad tale of oppressive edicts, pressing always more and more severely upon our brethren ; of families desolated and scattered ; of temples pulled down and congregations dispersed. There were still sadder tales to be told, of abjurations and apostasies—some forced by harshness, others brought about by bribes and cajolery. Then the preacher changed his tone and spoke of midnight assemblies, like that of ours in the cellar of the old grange ; of consistóries held and discipline administered in caves and lonely places of the mountains, and of our fallen brethren coming, with tears and on bended knees, imploring to be restored to that communion to which to belong meant shame, imprisonment, and death. The old man's face shone and his voice rang like a trumpet as he told of these things, stirring every heart in the assembly, even mine. I felt miserably ashamed of my late frame of mind, and resolved that I would forsake the world, and live for heaven once more.

The sermon was long, but it came to a close at last, and the Lord's Supper was administered. It was then that my mother discovered our two old friends. I feared at first that she would faint, but she recovered herself, and when they came to us after sermon she was far calmer and more collected than they were. She invited them home to our lodgings, which were not far distant, and they spent the rest of the day with us.

"How and when did you leave home?" was naturally the first question.

"About two weeks after the house was burned, madame," answered Simon.

"It is burned, then," said my mother.

"Oh, yes, madame. The mob plundered it thoroughly and then set it on fire, and little is left but the shell. A fine gentleman came down from Paris a few days afterward. He was very angry at the destruction, and threatened all sorts of things if the plunder was not brought back, but he recovered very little. Our house was also set on fire, but owing to the rains it did not burn, and after a few days we ventured to return to it and gathered together some few things. I have a parcel for you, madame, intrusted to my care by Monsieur, which the wretches did not find. Our small store of ready money also escaped their hands. David, whom you know we were expecting, came just then, and we returned with him to Dieppe, and after a week or two he found us a passage to England. As I said, we had a small store of ready money, but it soon melted away, and though, by Jeanne's skill in lace-making and mending and my own work with a market gardener, we have made shift to live, it has been poorly enough. But why should we complain? We are in safety, and can worship God according to our conscience."

"But David!" said I.

"He would not come, mamselle. He is in high favor with his employer, who protects him, and he says he has so many opportunities of helping others that he will not as yet abandon his post. Besides, he cherishes a hope, though I believe it is a vain one, of rescuing Lucille."

"Why do you think it a vain one?" I asked.

"Because, mamselle, she does not wish to be rescued. She has made a profession, as they call it, and we hear she is high in favor with her superiors, and a willing instrument in their hands in coaxing or compelling the poor little children to abjure. We thought it a great mercy when she, the last of five babes, was spared to us; but now I wish she had died in the cradle, like the rest."

"She is not yet out of the reach of mercy, my poor Simon," said my mother. "We must all remember her in our prayers." She paused, and then added, with a great effort,

"Do you know what became of my husband's body?"

"He rests in peace, madame," answered Sablot. "Jean La Roche and myself buried him at midnight, by the side of my own babes, in our orchard. We levelled the ground and laid back the turf, so that none should suspect."

My mother rose and left the room, making me a sign not to follow her. When she came back at the end of an hour she had evidently been weeping bitterly; but she was now quite calm. She asked many questions about our servants, our tenants, and neighbors. The maids had all escaped, in one way or other, he told us. Julienne, he thought, would conform, as her sweetheart was earnest with her to do so. Marie had gone to Charenton. Old Mathew was found dead in the orchard, but without any marks of violence, and Simon thought he had died of the shock, as he was a very old man. Of Henri he knew nothing.

"And what will you do, my poor friends?" said my mother. "How can we help you? If I were not going to the house of another I would take you with me."

"Oh, we shall do very well, madame," said Jeanne cheerfully. "I get a great deal of fine washing and mending, especially of lace, and if Simon could buy some turner's tools of his own he might set up a little shop."

"I have a better plan than that," said Andrew. "My mother writes me that our old gardener is just dead, and she knows not where to find another. You shall go down to Cornwall and take his place.

As for Jeanne, she can wait upon madame, and each old Deborah to make omelettes and galette. That will be better than living in a dingy street in London, will it not?"

"May Heaven's blessing rest upon you, my son," said my mother, while my poor foster-parents could hardly speak a word, so overpowered were they with the prospect suddenly opened before them. I was as pleased as my mother, and at that moment would not have exchanged my sailor for the finest gallant about the court.

The next day the business of the jewels was finished, and so favorably for us that we were made quite independent in point of means. My mother insisted on Simon's retaining at least half of the package of gold he had brought away with him, and which he had never broken in upon in his greatest needs, and Jeanne was soon neatly dressed in English mourning. In a few days we embarked with all our goods, which indeed were not burdensome by reason of quantity, in a ship going to Plymouth. We had a short and prosperous voyage, and after resting a day or two in Plymouth we took horse for the far more toilsome journey into Cornwall.

CHAPTER XI.

TRE MADOC.

IT was a toilsome journey. Andrew had taken great pains to provide easy horses for us, and we carried some comforts in the way of provisions, biscuits, gingerbread, two or three flasks of wine, and small packages of coffee, and one of the new Chinese drink called tea, which had just begun to come in fashion, and which has now become quite common, even in tradesmen's families. For this, as for many other kindnesses, we were indebted to Mr. Pepys and his good little wife. We did not travel very rapidly, the roads being bad, even at this time of the year, and such as in many places forbade our travelling otherwise than in single file. The weather was charming—that was one comfort—and the air as delicious as any I ever breathed in my life. As we crossed the high moors, we saw abundance of those old heathen monuments which abound in Normandy, and still more in Brittany, and once we passed one almost exactly like that above our orchard, where my father and I had our memorable conversation. We stopped for rest and refreshment in little country towns, and sometimes at lonely inns standing by themselves, such as would not have been considered very safe abiding-places in France, and where we should have been at a loss to make ourselves understood but for Andrew and the sailor whom he had taken along from Plymouth. The Cornish tongue, which is now fallen greatly into disuse, was at that time generally spoken among the common people. I picked up a good deal of it afterward, but at that time it was all heathen Greek to me, though my mother could speak it a little. I must needs say that, though we must have appeared as outlandish to them as they did to us, the good folks were most kind to us, especially when they had heard something of our story. They would express their sympathy by sighs and tears, and by bringing out to us the best that they had ; and the men would often leave their work and walk miles beside us to guide us on our way.

Simon kept up his courage very well, and indeed he enjoyed the journey ; but poor Jeanne's spirits sank lower and lower, and I think she would have given out altogether had we not come, on the fifth day, to cultivated fields and orchards. The sight of these last revived her drooping courage, and when at last we reached the village of Tre Madoc, always a neat little place, and passing it came to the brow of the hill from which we looked down on the house of Tre Madoc, nestling amid great trees in its south-land valley, with the clear stream falling in a cascade at the upper end and rushing down to the sea, she was quite another woman.

"Is this not beautiful, Jeanne?" said my mother, her eyes filling with tears as she gazed on the old home, unseen for so many years.

"It is, madame; I won't deny it, though the house is nothing in grandeur to the Tour d'Antin. And the cottages do look snug and comfortable; but after all it is not France!"

"No, it is not France: don't you wish it were?" said I. "How nice it would be to see a party of dragoons coming after us over the hill, and to be afraid to pass yonder tumbling old cross lest some one should see that we did not bow to it!"

I am conscious that I spoke these words all the more sharply because I was myself dreadfully homesick—not for France so much as for London, with which I had fallen in love, though I had begun by disliking it so much. I had had a taste of that gay life of which I had so often dreamed, and I found the cup too sweet to wish to have that taste the only one.

My mother looked at me in surprise, but she had no time to speak the reproof which her eyes uttered. It seemed that we were expected and watched for. We saw a little lad, who had been sitting with his dog and clapper watching the birds, leave his occupation and run down toward the house, and presently an elderly lady, surrounded by three or four young ones, came out upon the porch.

"There are my mother and sisters," said Andrew; "and," he added to me, in a lower tone, "*your* mother, too, Vevette! I hope you will love her."

"I am sure I shall," I tried to answer graciously, though I felt inwardly vexed. I always was provoked when Andrew said any such thing implying a kind of property in me. I felt an unaccountable shyness of these new relatives, such as I had not been conscious of either in Jersey or London, and I wished the meeting with them could be postponed. But our tired beasts now put themselves into brisk motion, rejoicing, poor creatures, in the thought of rest and food. We descended the hill, passed through a short avenue of nut-trees, and came out before the same porch, overgrown with ivy and a great Virginia vine, as we used to call it, and found ourselves in presence of our friends. Andrew sprang from his horse and assisted my mother and myself to dismount. The older lady clasped my mother in her arms. "Dearest sister Margaret," said she, kissing her on both cheeks, "welcome home! It is a happy day that sees you enter your father's house once more. And this is my new daughter. Heaven bless you, my love! I have a flock of maidens, as you see, but there is plenty of room for one more. And who are these?" turning to Simon and Jeanne, who had also dismounted and stood modestly in the background.

My mother explained matters, and our poor friends were welcomed in their turn and committed to the care of a very nice old woman, to be made comfortable, while one of half a dozen old blue-coated serving-men led away our horses and attended to our luggage. Then we were conveyed into a parlor, a large low room wainscoted with cedar and hung with handsome though faded needlework. Here we were relieved of our riding gear and presented to our other cousins, of whom I was too tired and confused to see aught but that Betty was small and dark, Margaret tall and fair, and Rosamond very much like somebody I had known, I could not say whom.

"But you are both tired with your long journey, I am sure," said my aunt, after the first greetings had been exchanged. "Rosamond and Betty shall show you your lodgings, and when you have refreshed yourselves we will meet at supper. I have given you the gilded room, Margaret, and to Agnes—or do you call her Genevieve?—the little chamber over the porch beside it. I might have given you a more sumptuous apartment, my dear," she added, turning to me; "though indeed we are but plain country folks at best; but the porch room hath a pleasant lookout, and I thought you would like to be near your mother."

I murmured something, I hardly knew what, and my mother answered for me. "Vevette is not used to luxury, my dear sister, and the porch room is good enough for any young maid. May I ask you to send Jeanne to me? She will feel herself very strange, I fear."

"She shall attend you directly," answered my aunt; "and glad I am that two such confessors for the faith should find a shelter under this roof."

"Take heed to the steps," said Rosamond, as we came to the foot of the staircase: "they are somewhat slippery."

That they were, being of dark oak, and polished like glass with age and much scrubbing. However, I was used to polished floors, and so did not get a fall. We traversed a long gallery hung with pictures, and came to my mother's room, which was large and low. Above the wainscot the walls were covered with old-fashioned stamped and gilded leather, such as one seldom sees now. The bed was of needlework, with wondrous white and fine linen—a matter in which we Corbets have always been particular. There was a small Turkey carpet on the floor, and quite a fine Venice glass, with branches, handsomer than that in my aunt's dressing-room in London. I thought the room as pretty as any one I had ever seen. Indeed, the whole house was finished with a richness uncommon in remote country houses at that day, for the men of the family, taking naturally to a seafaring life, had brought home from abroad many articles of luxury and beauty.

My own room was by far the prettiest I had ever inhabited, even at my aunt's house in London. It was partly over the porch, as my aunt had said, and had a kind of projecting window which commanded a lovely view of the sea and the shore. The bed was small and hung with white, and there was a queer old cabinet or chest of drawers, which reminded me at once of Jeanne's cherished *bahut*, which she often sighed over.

"That cabinet came from the south of France, they say," said Rosamond, seeing my eyes fixed upon it. "My grandfather brought it home for a present to his wife."

"There she goes," said Betty, laughing. "Rosamond knows the history of every old piece of furniture and tapestry and every old picture and sampler in the old house, and will retail them to you by the hour, if you care to listen to her. They are all precious relics in her eyes."

"I am sure I shall care," said I, seeing that Rosamond looked a little dashed. "I love things that have histories, and that old cabinet is so like one that my poor foster-mother used to have that I fell in love with it in a moment; I think Rosamond and I will agree finely."

It was now Betty's turn to look a little vexed, but her face cleared up directly.

"You will have abundance of entertainment, then, for the house is a museum of old furniture and oddities. But this old tabernacle is a convenient affair. Here are empty drawers, as you see, and a place to write, and in this large drawer you will find clean towels and napkins as you want them. Come, Rosamond, let us leave Agnes to dress herself. I am sure she must feel the need of it."

I did indeed need such a refreshment, after my long ride. My mail was already in the room, and it was with considerable satisfaction that I arrayed myself in one of the new frocks which had been made for me in London, and which, as I could not but be aware, set off to considerable advantage my slender, erect figure. Then, very well satisfied with myself, I went into my mother's room, where I found Jeanne, much refreshed in mind and body, and disposed to regard her new home with more favorable eyes. My mother was already dressed, and, seated in a great chair covered with needlework flowers in faded silks, was directing Jeanne in the unpacking of her mail and the disposition of her clothes.

"You look well, my child," said she, holding out her hand to me. "Have not the lines fallen to us in pleasant places? Even Jeanne admits that the Cornish folk are Christian people, since, though they cannot speak French, they know how to make cider."

"And very good cider too, madame," answered Jeanne; "and though I think them not very polite to smile at the English which I learned so well to speak in London, yet one must not expect too much of them, living as they do at the very world's end. Why, they tell me, at least that old sailor did, there is absolutely no land between the shore yonder and that savage country of America. Do you think that can be true, madame? It makes one almost afraid."

"It is quite true, my Jeanne; but I see no cause for fear," answered my mother, smiling. "Some of our own people have settled in America, and are prospering well. We have even relatives abiding there. My husband and I have sometimes talked of the possibility of going thither ourselves. Is not this a pretty place, my Vevette?"

"Yes, maman, very pretty, only—" and here I stopped, for something choked me, and I felt a great disposition to cry.

"Only it is all strange and new, and my little one is overwrought," said my mother, kissing me. "I forget it is not a home-coming to you as to me. Yet I hope you will try to be happy here," she added, regarding me wistfully.

"Indeed I will, dear maman," I answered, making a great effort to control myself, and succeeding pretty well. "I think the house is beautiful, especially this room and my own; and only think, Mother Jeanne, there is a *bahut* almost like yours, and my cousin Rosamond says it came from the south of France. Perhaps it was made by the same man."

"That could hardly be, mamselle, for my great-grandfather made mine. He was a skilful man, I have heard say, and made many beautiful pieces for great houses."

"Then why not this one? Go and look at it," said I. Jeanne obeyed, and soon came back in great excitement.

"It was—it really was made by my great-grandfather, madame!" she cried. "There are the two doves pecketting on the top just the same, and the very sign—the olive-leaf marked with a circle—which he used to put on all his work. Is it not wonderful, madame? Is it not a good omen?" And again she went back to examine the cabinet, and I followed her, listening with interest while she pointed out the maker's sign carved here and there upon the doors and drawers, and the peculiar beauty of the steel hinges and locks.

This little incident diverted my mind and put me into better spirits, and when Rosamond came to call us to supper I was ready to meet her with a smile. The meal was served in another room from that we had seen before—a high-arched room with a gallery crossing one end, which was situated—so Rosamond told me—in the older part of the house, and was formerly the great hall. The meal was well served, and seemed wonderfully abundant, though I was growing accustomed to English profusion in the matter of eating and drinking. I could not but admire the white, glossy sheen of the damask cloth and napkins, and the beautiful china dishes, more beautiful than any I had ever seen. China collecting was a great passion then, and my aunt in London would have given one of her little pink ears for the curious standard dish full of early strawberries which adorned the supper-table, or the tall jug crowned with frothy whipped cream beside it.

We young ones were more or less silent, of course, while my mother and my Aunt Amy talked about old times, and who was dead, and whose son had married which one's daughter, and all the rest of the chat which goes on when old neighbors come together. My dear mother was—no disparagement to her either—a bit of a gossip; though, as we had few friends among our French neighbors, she had had little opportunity of indulging her tastes; but now she grew more animated and interested than I had ever seen her, in hearing all the news my Aunt Amy had to tell.

"And what about our cousins at Stantoun?" asked my mother presently. "From what Andrew tells me, I suppose the present lady is not much like the one I knew."

"No more than chalk is like cream-cheese," answered Aunt Amy. "Yet she is a good lady, too, and a kind stepmother to the lad who is left, though she had two daughters of her own when she married my lord."

"And what like are they?"

"Nay, that you must ask Andrew. He has seen more of them than I have."

"Theo is well enough," said Andrew. "She is a merry girl, who cares not much for anything but pleasure and finery, but she is good-natured at least. Martha is a girl of another stamp. I pity the man who marries her. She hath far more mind than Theo, but such a temper! Disagree with her ever so little—do but dare to like what she hates or know something she does not—and she is your enemy for life."

"Gently, gently, my son," said his mother, with a little laugh. "What hath poor Martha done to you?"

"Nothing to me, mother, but I have seen enough of her doings to others. I believe there is but one person in the world she stands in awe of—her mother—and but one she loves—her half-brother, the young lord. I do think she cares for him."

"Ah, well!" said my aunt easily, "if she has such a temper it brings its own punishment."

"And the punishment of a good many others also, unluckily," said Andrew, and then the conversation turned to other things.

After supper Andrew proposed that we should go up and see the gardens. The elders preferred sitting in the house, but we young ones went out, after proper injunctions to keep moving and not to stay out after the dew began to fall. Gardening, it appeared, had also been a fashion with these curious Corbets, who seem to me from the earliest records to have made their homes as pleasant as possible, only to run as far away from them as the limits of the world would allow. The flower-beds were in their spring beauty, and were filled with rare plants and flowers, which I never saw anywhere else. The climate of Cornwall is very mild, so that the myrtle grows to a great size out of doors, and many tender trees flourish which will not live at all about London. I particularly admired a tall shrub with red-veined leaves and covered with little scarlet bells in immense profusion, and asked its name.

"I cannot tell you that," said Andrew. "My father brought it from the West Indies, where it grows very large. This other bush, with bright scarlet flowers and broad leaves, is from the Cape of Good Hope, but it will bear no frost, so we take it in in the winter."

"What great rosemary and lavender plants!" said I. "They make me think of what Jeanne has told me about Provence, where they grow wild."

"They do fairly well, though the place is damp for them. See, yonder is a tulip-tree. Is it not a grand one? The Americans make great use of the wood, which, though soft, is very lasting for some purposes."

"What a pity to cut down such beautiful trees!" said I. Andrew laughed.

"Trees are the great enemies over there," said he. "It did look terribly wasteful to me to see great logs of hard maple, chestnut, and oak, rolled into heaps and burned in the field, just to get rid of them."

"What a shame!" said Betty. "Why not at least give them to the poor for fuel. Goody Penaluna would be glad enough of such a log."

"If Goody Penaluna were there she would have wood enough for the asking," replied Andrew. "One can hardly say there are any poor, for though they have often had hard times enough, yet it mostly comes share and share alike."

"I believe Andrew hath a hankering after those same colonies in his secret soul," said Betty.

"You will find yourself transplanted thither some time or other, Agnes."

Again I felt annoyed. I did not know why.

"Do not call me Agnes; call me Vevette," said I. "That is the name I have always been used to."

"But Agnes is so much prettier. Vevette is like a nickname," objected Betty.

"It is a sort of pet name, I suppose—short for Genevieve," remarked Margaret. "If Vevette likes it best, she certainly has a right to choose."

"But it is French," objected Betty again, "and she is an English girl now. I am quite sure mother would prefer to have her called Agnes, and Andrew too; wouldn't you, Andrew?"

"I should prefer that she should have her own way in the matter," answered Andrew shortly, and there the discussion ended for the time; but we were no sooner in the house than Betty began it again, appealing to her mother to say if it would not be much better for me to be called by my English name now I was come to live in England.

"That is for her mother to say," replied Aunt Amy. "I presume she will prefer to call her by the name she has been used to."

"I certainly shall prefer to do so, and to have others do so," said my mother. "The name of Agnes was never a favorite of mine."

Betty said no more, but she never lost an opportunity of calling me Agnes, till I took to calling her Elizabeth, to which name she had a special aversion.

The next morning and for many succeeding days my mother was very unwell, and I naturally spent most of my time with her in her apartment, which was at some little distance from the rest of the house. Jeanne attended on her, and Simon worked in the garden, taking great pleasure in the variety of plants and flowers he found there. He got on very well with his fellow-servants, being of a quiet and sober disposition. He did not at all disturb himself when laughed at for his mistakes in English, but only laughed back, or contented himself with quietly correcting his mistake. But Jeanne's southern blood was more easily stirred, and she more than once came to my mother declaring that she could endure her life no longer. Betty used to take pleasure in teasing her, as indeed she did every one who came within her reach, except her mother and Andrew, of whom she stood in awe. She and I had more than one encounter, in which I can safely say that she met her match, and she did not like me the better for it; but Rosamond was her especial butt, and she made the poor girl's life miserable. Rosamond was of a studious turn of mind, and loved nothing so much as to get away by herself, with a great chronicle, or with her French or Latin books. It was a somewhat uncommon disposition at that time, when the education of women was much neglected, even more than it is now. But the Corbets have always been rather a bookish race. and Rosamond was a true Corbet in all things. She loved acquiring new ideas above any other pleasure in the world. She made Simon tell her all about Normandy and Brittany, and there were several old sailors in the village to whose tales of foreign parts she was delighted to listen for hours, albeit I fear they were sometimes more romantic than reliable. Aunt Amy never interfered with this taste of Rosamond's, but allowed her to read as much as she pleased, though she never cared to open a book herself. Margaret was Rosamond's champion in all things, though she thought so much reading a waste of time ; but Betty was always tormenting the poor girl, hiding her books, destroying her collections of dried plants and shells, and laughing at and exaggerating the mistakes which she now and then made in her preoccupation. I must say that in general Rosamond bore all with the utmost sweetness, but now and then she would fly into a passion. Then Betty would provoke her more and more till she succeeded in driving Rosamond into a burst of passionate crying, which generally ended in a fit of the mother, which brought my aunt on the scene. Then Betty would be all sweetness and soothing attentions to the sufferer, bringing everything she could think of to relieve her, and affecting to pity and pet her till, if it had been me, I am sure I should have boxed her ears. Aunt Amy never saw through these manœuvres, but when Rosamond recovered she would talk to her seriously about the necessity of governing her temper, and Rosamond would listen humbly and meekly promise to try and do better. There was always more real worth in her little finger than there was in Betty's whole person, but her timidity and absent-minded ways often made her appear at a disadvantage. She and my mother were soon great friends, and she used to bring her precious books to our apartment, where Betty dared not intrude. Here she would read aloud to us for hours, or practise her French and Italian with maman and myself. She spoke them both horribly, but was very desirous to improve, and made great progress. Margaret also joined in the French lessons, but she had a great many other things on her hands. She took a good deal of the care of housekeeping off her mother. She visited the poor in the village, and worked for them, and she had taken upon herself a kind of supervision of the dame school, which furnished all the education for the village of Tre Madoc. Old Dame Penberthy, who taught or rather kept it, had not been a very good scholar in her best days, I imagine, and she was now old and half blind. The little children were sent to her to be kept out of mischief, and taken away as soon as they were fit for any sort of work. Some of the brightest of them learned enough to pick out, with much stammering, a chapter in the Testament, and these were the dame's best scholars, whom she exhibited with great pride. Margaret, however, had lately taken the school in hand, moved thereto by something she had read, and also by Andrew's wish for a better state of things. He had seen in the American colonies day-schools established for all sorts of children, and he wished for something of the same sort at Tre Madoc. So Margaret had persuaded the dame to take home an orphan grandneice, a clever girl who had lived a while at the court, and the old woman easily fell into the way of letting this girl, Peggy Mellish by name, have most of the charge of the school. Margaret herself went every other day, to inspect the sewing and spinning, and to hear the children say their horn-book and teach them their Belief and Commandments.* By and by she would have me join her in this work. I was fond of walking and of children; my mother and Andrew favored the plan, and so I took hold of it with great zeal, and after a few visits along with Margaret to learn her ways, I even took charge of the school on alternate days, and soon knew as much about the families of the children, their wants and ways, as Margaret herself. Thus it came to pass that Betty was in a manner left out in the cold. It was her own fault, I must needs say, for she laughed equally at Meg's and my teaching and Rosamond's learning; but she was not any more pleased for that; and so, partly from idleness, partly for revenge, she set herself to make mischief between Andrew and me. But I must put off the relation to another chapter.

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* A horn-book was a printed sheet containing the alphabet and some other lessons, protected from moist little fingers by a sheet of transparent horn

CHAPTER XII.

MISCHIEF.

I HAVE said that my mother was very unwell for a time after her arrival at Tre Madoc, and my aunt feared she would go off in a quick decline; but by degrees she recovered strength again, so as to walk into the garden to help my aunt in the still-room and dairy occupations, of which she was very fond, and after a while to ride the easy old pony as far as the village, to see some of the sick and old people. An accident had happened to Andrew's ship, the Enterprise, which had put off her sailing for some weeks. We were all very glad of the respite, my mother especially, to whom Andrew was most devoted—more so than to myself, which was very sensible of him. He used to walk at her bridle-rein, gather flowers for her, and in short pay her a great many attentions which were more lover-like than filial. He had never again spoken to me on the subject of marriage, and always sharply hushed up any allusion to the matter on the part of other members of the family; and though he was very kind and very attentive to my comfort, it was more as a brother than a lover. It was the course, if he had known it, just calculated to make me care for him, if only out of pique, and accordingly I began to watch for his coming, to wonder whether he would ask me to walk with him, and to dress so as to please his eye. I began to take an interest in the farm and garden, as indeed I had been used to do at home, and I was more than ever zealous in visiting and working for the school and the poor folks. My aunt had taken to me at once, and I to her, and I believe but for the meddling of another we should never have had a falling out. My charitable work and my studies with Rosamond and my mother had again brought my better self uppermost, and despite Betty's teasing and an occasional sigh for London, or a spasm of home-sickness for dear Normandy, I was very happy.

I have said that Betty set herself to make mischief, and she succeeded certainly to her heart's content, or one would have thought so. She is gone to her account long ago, poor thing, and I feel tenderly toward her memory, for she was my Andrew's sister; but I cannot make my story understood without speaking of her faults.

She began with Jeanne. The housekeeper and chief personage under Margaret was an old woman named Deborah Permuen, an excellent person, but of somewhat irritable temper, and very jealous of her authority and her influence with her mistress. She and Jeanne had begun by being great friends;

for Deborah was a hot Protestant, and a Presbyterian to boot, who, though she regularly attended the parish church on Sundays, as regularly went on Thursdays to a gathering of her own sort of folks, which was held in a cottage on the verge of the estate. She even condescended to learn of Jeanne how to prepare an "omelette aux herbs" and several other French dishes, imparting in return various important culinary secrets of her own.

By degrees, however, her friendship cooled. She began to throw out hints about interlopers, and French Jesuits in disguise coming to interfere in peaceable families. She declined anything but civilly a proposition of Jeanne's to teach her the true way of making a galette; and at last—the crowning offence—threw into the pig's mess a fine salad with crawfish, which Jeanne had prepared for Andrew's birthday, declaring that she would not have her young master poisoned with French pigwash. Jeanne rushed to my mother with complaints, not observing or not heeding that my aunt was in the next room looking over a drawer of linen in the cabinet. Then Deborah was called upon the scene, and told her story, which she did with many tears and exclamations that ever she should have lived to see the day that she should be supplanted by a foreigner, and so on.

"You foolish old woman, what do you mean?" said my aunt, out of patience at last. "Who is thinking of supplanting you?"

"Why, that French woman there?" sobbed

Deborah, pointing to Jeanne, who, burning with indignation all the more because my mother had imposed silence on her, stood behind her mistress' chair. "Did not she say that she would have me out of this house in a twelvemonth, and that when her young lady ruled the roast in the parlor it would be her turn in the kitchen?"

"I don't believe she said so," said my mother; and she translated Deborah's remark for Jeanne's benefit.

"Indeed, indeed, madame, I never said such a word," was Jeanne's reply. "I never thought of such a thing. I had too much respect for Deborah, let alone Madame Corbet, ever to say a thing so unpolite, so improper."

"What did you say to Mrs. Betty then, when she asked you about it?" demanded Deborah, beginning to calm down a little.

"Nothing at all," was the answer. "Mrs. Betty said to me that she supposed I should be the—what say you?—the manager, when Mrs. Vevette and the young master were married, and that she hoped I would give them more nice things than Mrs. Deborah did; to which I answered nothing; for it did not seem to me, craving madame's pardon, that it was a proper way for a young lady of the house to speak to a servant. So, when she added something more, I said I was Madame d'Antin's servant, and at her disposal; and I added no more. My feelings have been much hurt by Mrs. Deborah's remarks of late; and to-day especially I was so moved by her treatment of my salad—ah, madame! such noble salade des écrevisses!—that I fear I forgot myself. Alas, it is too easy to wound the heart of an exile and a childless mother." And here Jeanne wept in her turn, and Deborah began to look rather ashamed, and to mutter some thing about "not meaning."

"I see how it is," said my aunt, who with all her easiness of disposition was not a person to be despised; "Deborah has allowed herself to be prejudiced, and to believe her mistress capable of the most unworthy conduct."

"Oh, mistress, don't!" implored Deborah, weeping afresh.

"And she has been guilty of great unkindness toward a stranger and a foreigner, and one of her own religion," added my aunt, with emphasis; "while Jeanne has perhaps been too hasty and ready to take offence."

"I own it, madame," sobbed Jeanne in her turn; "I have been too hasty; but to be called a Jesuit, when I have suffered so much by them; and then my beautiful salad, which the young master used to like so much in France—"

"Well, never mind," said my aunt. "I am sure Deborah is sorry she called you by such an ugly name; and as to the salad, I think if we can forgive the loss, you can. Come, now, let me see you shake hands and make friends, like Christian women; and let me hear of no more quarrels."

The two combatants obeyed, with a very decent grace on Deborah's side, and with considerable effusion on that of Jeanne, who adored my aunt, and, to do her justice, was always placable. Deborah departed to her own dominions, and my aunt, going to her own room, sent for Mrs. Betty, who did not appear at dinner, and who was at least more careful in her conduct for some days, though I have reason to think her heart was little affected by her disgrace or her mother's admonitions. It was only a few days afterward that Jeanne came to her mistress again, with a humble request that she would intercede with Madame Corbet to allow her to change her room. For since my mother had been so unwell Jeanne had occupied a room at the end of the gallery leading to our apartment, which, as I have said, was somewhat separated from the rest of the house.

"Why, what is the matter with the room?" asked my mother; "I thought it a very nice one."

"And so it is madame, but—"

"But what?"

"I would rather not sleep there, madame."

"Some one has been telling you ghost stories," said I, a sudden idea coming to me. "Is it not so?"

"Ah, mamselle!" and Jeanne began to cry, as usual.

"Do be reasonable," said my mother, rather impatiently, for she was tired and not very well. "Stop crying, and tell me what has scared you."

It was not easy to pacify Jeanne, but we succeeded at last, and then the truth came out. Mrs. Betty had told her that a headless woman with fiery eyes came out of a secret closet in the hall of that room, which no one had been able to find, and that whoever saw her became blind.

"Where does she keep her fiery eyes, if she has no head—in her pocket?" I asked, laughing at this very original ghost. "Perhaps she carries them on a dish before her, like St. What's-her-name in the picture."

"Ah, mamselle! do not laugh. I did indeed see something—two fiery eyes in the dark—and my eyes have not felt right since."

"The eyes of that great gray cat which is always following you up-stairs and down," said my mother. Then, seeing that the poor woman was really unhappy, she tried to reason her out of her fears on religious grounds, but, as usually happens in such cases, without much success. Jeanne owned the truth of all she said; but— Finally my mother gave way, and asked my aunt to allow a cot-bed to be put into the large light closet which opened from my mother's room.

"Why, certainly, if you like to have her there," said my aunt. "You know I thought it would be more convenient for you, in the first place."

"It is not that exactly," replied my mother; "but Jeanne has taken a fit of superstitious terror and is afraid of, I know not what apparition, which some one has told her comes out of a closet in the wall of her room. I have reasoned with her, but, of course, to no purpose.

"Is there really such a ghost about the house, aunt?" I asked.

"There used to be an old story to that effect," said my aunt; "but I do not know that any one has ever seen the apparition. Cornwall is famous for such things. You shall hardly find an old hall or mansion in the country which has not its tale of wonder."

"I think there is more of it than there used to be in Normandy even," I remarked. "Old Dame Trehorn was quite in despair about her sons yesterday, because she says she heard the old shoes dance of themselves in the press the night before last, and she is sure their owners either are or will be drowned. And Mary Mellish would not let the children come to school yesterday because some one heard the wish-hounds the night before."

"It is a pity the poor people would not learn to have more faith in God and less fear of apparitions and the like," said my mother.

My aunt looked a little displeased. "I suppose, sister Meg, you will hardly go so far as to say there are no such things as ghosts and fairies and the like," said she. "That would indeed be to be wiser than our fathers."

"But, Aunt Amy, we are wiser than our fathers in a great many things, or think we are," said I. "Our fathers used to believe in purgatory, and worshipping of images and the like, but we do not."

My aunt deigned me no answer.

"As to Jeanne, sister, you will of course do as you please, since she is your woman, and the apartment is yours. I would, however, that you would try to teach her to live on better terms with Deborah and the other woman. I am not used to these quarrels below stairs."

I would have spoken, for I felt very warm in defense of my foster-mother, but maman checked me with a look, and said gently that she hoped not to need Jeanne much longer, and after that she would of course lodge with her husband at his cottage.

"Why, there it is," said my aunt. "As soon as one speaks a word, you take offence. And now that we are on the subject" (she did not say *what* subject), "I must say that I cannot think it becomes Yevette to remark upon my housekeeping before the maids. She is not yet mistress, however she may come to be, and I think young maids had best learn in silence and not pass their judgment on what is done by their elders. *Our* Catechism teaches young folks to order themselves lowly and reverently to their betters, whatever yours may do in France." And here my aunt stopped, having talked herself quite out of breath.

"What do you mean, aunt?" I asked, quite bewildered by this accusation. "When have I censured you?"

"Oh, you know very well what I mean, I am quite sure. It might be only thoughtlessness, but you ought to be more careful."

"But, aunt, indeed I do not know; I have not the least idea," said I, which was quite true.

"Will you be so kind, sister Corbet, as to tell my child and her mother to what your allude?" said my mother, with all that stateliness which was natural to her, but speaking kindly. "I assure you that if my daughter hath done wrong, either wilfully or carelessly, she shall ask your pardon."

Aunt Amy had had time to cool. "Ah, well, I dare say it was but thoughtlessness; and young maids must be young maids, I suppose."

"But what was it?" my mother persisted, to my secret delight, for I was not conscious of any offence.

Aunt Amy could not remember the words; only Betty had told her that I had found fault with the housekeeping, and said that when I was mistress I would have things thus and so. I began to see daylight.

"Dear aunt, I will tell you how it was," said I. "We were all gathering lavender-flowers for the still, and I saw that Peggy, the still-room maid, had been crying, and asked what was the matter. She said the mistress had been scolding her because she had on ragged stockings, and because she did not keep her head neat; and Betty asked me if I did not think that was hard on the poor girl, when she had so much to do. And I said no: if I were her mistress I would make her knit her own hose and wear a clear-starched cap every day, as the maids do in Normandy. Then Meg laughed, and said I would be a pattern housekeeper, no doubt; and I said I did not believe I should ever be as good-natured as you were. That was the whole of it. I am sure nothing was farther from my thoughts than any disrespect; and as to your housekeeping, I think it is as perfect as can be—only, of course, many of the ways are different from ours, and when I notice them 'tis natural to speak of them."

"Betty made much more of the matter than that," said my aunt. "Well, sister Meg, I will have a cot-bed sent up, and you can place it where you please. I am sure I want every one under my roof to be comfortable, each in their degree. But another thing I must speak of." Aunt Amy was like many other easy-going folks: when she got started she never knew when to stop. "I don't want you, Agnes—I mean Vevette, or whatever your name is—I don't want you turning my girls' heads with romances and plays and stories of London gayeties and London fine gentlemen and ladies. If you have a taste for such matters, it is a pity you had not stayed with your uncle, and married some fine gentleman about the court, instead of poor Andrew, whose estate will stand no such doings, as I warn you beforehand. There, I want no answer; but don't do it again." And with that she bustled away.

"What does it all mean?" I asked, when I was left alone with my mother.

"It means what I might have considered before we came here—that no one house was ever yet large enough for two families," said my mother. "But what is this about turning heads with stories about London?"

"Why, maman, you know how Rosamond is—how she is always longing to hear about places one has seen. The night before last I said I had told her everything I could think of about La Manche and Jersey, and I should have to begin upon London. So I told her of the parks and the palace and other places where I went with my uncle and aunt and with Mr. and Mrs. Pepys. Then Betty began asking me whether my uncle and aunt did not see a deal of gay company, and so I told her something about that, and about the dresses in the park, and so on. Rosamond did not care to hear, and went away to her book, but Betty kept me telling a long time. And last night she asked me about it again, and whether I would not have liked to live with my aunt Jemima in London."

"And what did you say?" asked my mother.

"I said, 'Not to leave you;' and besides, since I had come down here and learned to know the people, I liked the place; and so I do. Only I shall not like it, I am sure, if my aunt turns against me."

"Let us hope she will not," said my mother. "Sister Amy is a good creature, but she has an oddity of disposition which belongs to her family. She will let herself be prejudiced against her best friend by any mischief-maker who will take the pains to do it. Her sister, who was my great friend when we were young, was just so. She made a hasty marriage, against the wishes of her father and of her husband's family, and though they forgave her afterward, she was for some time in a good deal of trouble. I stood by her through all, yet she let herself be altogether set against me by some of her husband's relations, who had themselves said the most shameful things about her, even affecting her reputation as a virtuous woman."

"She must have been very silly," said I.

"In that respect she certainly was. But, my Vevette, let me hear no more of these talks with Betty about London. They are not very good for yourself, who have, I fear, now and then a longing back-look to the courts of Egypt, and I doubt their being good for Betty herself. You had best avoid her company, so far as you can without offence, and above all do not have any confidences with her. Margaret and Rosamond are as open as the day, but unless I much misread poor Betty, she is a born mischief-maker."

Here the conversation ended. That evening Betty began again to ask me about London, having drawn me away from the rest of the young folks who were assembled on the green; but I gave her short answers, and at last plainly told her that I could say no more about the matter.

"But why not?" asked Betty. "You talked long enough about it last night."

"Yes, and you went and told your mother, and she lectured me this morning about turning your head with stories of London fine gentlemen."

Betty assumed an air of innocent surprise.

"Did you not want me to tell, then?" said she. "I never thought of that. I have no secrets from *my* mother."

I was too angry to trust myself with a word, and I turned back to where the rest of the family were standing, looking at a pair of hawks which Andrew had taken from the nest and trained himself; for, sailor as he was, he was very fond of field sports, specially of hawking. I placed myself at his side, and began admiring and petting the hawks, which I had often fed till they were fond of me. Andrew looked pleased.

"I shall leave them in your care," said he; "only old Joslyns must take them out now and then or they will forget how to fly."

"I am sure I shall like to have them," said I. "And, Andrew, will you get me a new hare's-foot for Dame Penaluna? She says hers does no good because it was cut off below the first joint."

"What does she want it for—to paint her face withal?" asked Andrew. "That is what the fine ladies use them for, is it not?"

"So I have heard," I answered, laughing; "but the dame wants hers as a spell against the colic."

"She shall have it," said Andrew, and again he looked pleased, as he always did when I made any little request, which was not often, for I had grown shy of him of late. "You seem to be in the confidence of all the old women in the hamlet, from what I hear. What do you do to make them like you so much?"

"I don't know, unless it be that I listen to their stories," I answered. "I think old folks usually do like that. They like to tell, and I like to hearken, so we are both suited."

"Vevette is practising her part beforehand," said Betty, who had followed me back to the green. "She means to be perfect in it by the time she comes to be Lady of the Manor. My mother has never had time to do so much listening."

Andrew shot one of his fiery glances at his sister, while I was so confused and so angry both at once that I could not say a word. I was going into the house when he called me and asked me to walk with him to the end of the lane and look out upon the sea. Betty said she would go too, but Margaret called her back rather sharply, to my great joy, for I hardly felt like keeping terms with her, and I was determined not to quarrel if I could help it.

"You must not mind poor Betty," said Andrew. (Why is the most exasperating member of a family always spoken of as *poor* so and so?) "She has always been the contrary feather in the family nest, ever since she was born."

"I do not mean to mind her," said I, "if only she would not make mischief. But I think it is too bad in her to lead me on to tell her about London and my uncle and aunt there, and then go and tell your mother, as if it had been all my doing. And then—but there, what is the use?" I added. "You cannot understand, and there is no need of troubling you with the matter. Only I wish we had stayed in Jersey—that is all," I concluded, with a quiver in my voice. Andrew pressed my hand, and we were silent a few minutes. Then he said, "I have a favor to ask of you, Vevette."

"I am glad of it," said I, as indeed I was. "What can I do for you?"

"You are a famous knitter," said he. "Will you knit me a pair of long, warm woollen hose before I go?"

"Yes indeed; but do you not want more than one pair?"

"I did not suppose you would have time for more than one."

"That is a likely story!" said I. "As if I could not knit more than one pair of hosen in four weeks. I will begin them directly. I know Jeanne has been spinning some famous yarn."

We talked a little longer about various matters—about the places where Andrew was going, and the time when he would return—and then we fell into graver talk, and from that again to jesting, till I had quite recovered my serenity.

The next morning was my turn at the school, and I walked thither with my head quite full of schemes for the improvement of my little folk which I meant to talk over with Andrew, for somehow our walk and that the night before had put us in some degree upon our old brotherly and sisterly footing again. I found the children assembled and ready to welcome me, and we had a prosperous morning. When I came out, there was my mother on her pony, with Andrew at her bridle-rein as usual. My little regiment sent off quite a *feu de joie*, as I may say, of bobs and courtesies, showing their black curly heads and white teeth to great advantage; for they were, almost without exception, handsome. Cornwall was and is a country of handsome folk, and our hamlet is no exception to the rule.

"And how does the college prosper?" asked Andrew, after he had spoken to one and another of the young ones, and had acknowledged the salute of Peggy Mellish, who stood smiling and courtesying in her clean kirtle and apron, quite a picture of a young school-mistress.

"Very well," I answered; "only just now we are greatly in need of certain articles called knitting-pins. There are none to be had, it seems, nearer than Plymouth, if indeed they are to be found there. I want to teach the elder girls to knit, but I cannot if I have no pins."

"That does stand to reason," answered Andrew gravely; "but perhaps the blacksmith could make some of these same pins, with a little of my assistance. I am a bit of a smith myself."

"So you ought to be. The knights of old could forge their own armor, you know. But I think you are a little of everything," said I. "If ever we should be cast away upon a desert island, like the folks you read of yesterday, you could set up housekeeping, and make yourself a great king among the people."

"Jack at all trades and master at none," said

Andrew, looking pleased, as he always did when I made any such remark. "But here is your old dame's hare's-foot. It has the needful joint, you see. I cut it off myself."

"Many thanks. I will carry it to her if you will wait for me."

"Nay, we will all go that way—that is, if Andrew does not mind the walk," said my mother. "I have a fancy to see the old house at St. Wenna's Well."

"The walk is nothing, so the ride is not too much for you," answered Andrew. "As for Vevette, I know she minds walking no more than the old pony here."

"Very polite, to compare me to a pony," said I, pretending to pout. "But I shall like to see the old house. Does any one live in it?"

"Only the woman who cares for it; and she is worth seeing too," answered Andrew. "Is not this the old dame's cottage?"

It was, and the dame was within, groaning grievously with the colic; but no sooner did she take the hare's-foot into her hand, such was the virtue of the remedy or the effect of her faith in it, than she was presently quite easy.

"Do you suppose it really helped her?" I asked, when we were again on our way.

"Nay, that I cannot say," said Andrew. "'Tis an old notion, and for aught I know may have some virtue in it. At all events, it hath this advantage over some other medicaments, that if it does no good it can do no harm."

"What is there so odd about the housekeeper at the Well House?" I asked, when we had gone on a little.

"You will easily discover that when you see her," answered Andrew. "But aside from her person there is something peculiar in the manner of her appearance among us. She was found when a little child, wandering upon the sea-shore early one morning after a great storm of thunder and wind. She was very small, but from her ways it was judged she must be three or four years old, for she could speak plainly, though in a language none understood. She was somewhat richly dressed, and had about her neck a thin gold chain and the image of some bird wrought in the same metal. The folk thought her a fairy changeling or else a sea-maid, and were almost afraid of her; but an old couple then living in the Well House took her in and brought her up as their own. She well repaid their care, having been a most dutiful daughter to them. She hath never married, and now that the old folks are dead she lives in the Well House, to take care of it. She is an odd little body, but very faithful and honest."

We had by this time come in sight of the Well House, as it was called, which stood in its own little coombe opening down to the sea at the very mouth of Tre Madoc valley. It was a pretty little old house, built of warm red stone and shadowed by a great walnut-tree and an ash. At a little distance, and indeed almost joining the house, was a very tiny ruined chapel or oratory, such as one often sees by the roadside in France. A small bright stream ran through the garden, which was pretty though rather wild and overgrown. I took a fancy to the place at once.

"It hath not changed in the least," said my mother; "only the trees are grown and the old chestnut is away. What hath become of it?"

"It blew down a few years since in a great storm," answered Andrew. "I made a cabinet and table of the wood, which are now in the house."

Have you any of the chestnuts we brought from the Tour d'Antin?" asked my mother, turning to me. "If so, you might plant two or three here."

"I have them, but I fear they are too dry to grow," said I. "However, it can do no harm to try."

(Two of them did grow, and are now fine bearing trees.)

"See, there is the holy well, under the arch yonder," said my mother. "I wonder do the village maids come on St. John's even to drop needles into it that they may dream of their sweethearts?"

"Yes indeed; and the water is still sought for baptisms, under the notion that no person christened with that water will ever be hanged," said Andrew. "See, Vevette, there is my fairy housekeeper."

A fairy indeed she looked. I never saw so small a person not to be a dwarf, yet she was perfectly well proportioned and very upright. Her hair, a little touched with silver, was black as a crow's wing, and her eyebrows the same. On the whole she was a very handsome little creature, yet there was something about her so different from the country people among whom she lived that I did not wonder to hear that they regarded her as something not quite human. She made us welcome with great politeness, and I could but notice how well she spoke English. Andrew explained our errand.

"We shall give you some trouble, I fear," said my mother.

"Not at all, madame. It is a pleasure to me, and you are come in good time, for I have just been opening and airing the house." And indeed we had observed the open windows as we came up.

"We will not trouble you to go with us," said Andrew. "My aunt knows the house of old."

She courtesied and withdrew to her own special domain, and we went through all the rooms, which were in the best order, and certainly did credit to the sea-dame's housekeeping, being as dry and airy as if used all the time. In two or three of the rooms fires were burning on the hearth, and there was a peculiar air of cheerfulness about the whole place. I remarked this to Andrew.

"It does not seem at all like a deserted house," said I. "One would say these rooms were used to pleasant company."

"The village folks would tell you that Dinah entertains her friends from the sea in these apartments," said Andrew, smiling. "They tell stories of seeing the house lighted up and hearing music at night. I determined to look into the thing, thinking possibly that the place might be the haunt of smugglers; but I found the lights came from the fires Dinah had lighted to expel the damp, and the music was the old harpsichon, on which she had taught herself to play, by the help of some music-books she had found."

"Then she can read," said my mother.

"Oh, yes, and write as well. The people who took her in were of the better class. They were not Cornish folk, but East Country English, who came and settled here in the reign of Charles the First. No one knew much about them, and I fancy they might have had their own reasons for keeping quiet, but my father never would allow them to be molested. See, here is the cabinet I made from the old chestnut-tree."

"So you are a cabinet-maker as well," said I. "Another qualification for our desert island."

"That same desert island seems to take your fancy," said Andrew, smiling. "Perchance if you tried it, as I have done, you would not find it so pleasant."

"Were you really cast away?" I asked curiously. "When and where?"

"About ten years ago, on one of the most lovely little islets of the West Indies. It was like a bit out of paradise. We had landed for water, but a squall came up, and by some blunder I was left behind. I stayed there a week, and most thankful was I to see the face of man once more. But here we are in the parlor again, and I see Dinah has prepared quite a feast for us."

She had indeed spread an elegant little repast of bread, cream, and honey, with fruit from the garden. Of course we did not decline it, my mother eating to please the good woman, and Andrew and I because we were hungry.

"What an odd name she has!" said I.

"She called herself Diane when she was found, and for a long time would answer to no other, but at last her foster-parents took to calling her Dinah, with which she was content. Well, aunt, how do you like the house, now you have seen it?"

"So well that I am minded to find you a chapman," said my mother, smiling. "What say you? Will you sell the Well House to Vevette and myself? I wish to buy a home, and would rather have this than any other."

Andrew opened his eyes wide, as he was wont to do when puzzled.

"What do you mean, aunt? Are you in earnest? And why would you leave the hall? Hath any one in the family been unkind or uncivil to you?"

"Here is a fine mouthful of questions all in a breath," said my mother. "I will answer them all in turn. I am quite in earnest, and mean what I say. I would have the hall, because I think it will be better and more convenient for me to have my own household, and let your mother have hers. No one has been uncivil to me. I have had no quarrel with any one, and I mean to have none. But I never saw any house that was large enough for two families, and I do not believe Tre Madoc Court is any exception to the rule."

My mother went on to explain her reasons more at length than I shall do here. Andrew listened unwillingly at first, but at last he owned that there was right sense in what she said, and consented to consider of the matter.

"And what will Vevette say?" he asked, for I had not spoken a word.

"I like it well," I answered. "'Tis not so far but I can go up to the school. Rosamond can come down here with her books, and Meg with her knitting, and I dare say even you can make it convenient to stop sometimes when you come from your fishing."

He shook his head at me. "Well, well, we will consider of it," said he. "In truth, madame, you have a right to the tenancy of the house if you choose to live in it. I doubt not you will find it comfortable enough, and should anything be wanting I will see that it is supplied. There is a good garden, a small orchard, and land enough for two cows, if you choose to keep them. I think Dinah has one at present. But what to do with her! She looks upon this house as her home, though of course she hath no right here but on sufferance."

"Let her remain, if she will take the post of waiting gentlewoman," said my mother. "I shall want some such person, and our good Jeanne is hardly fitted for such a service. I like the woman's appearance. There is something about her which reminds me of home. Indeed, I think she is more French than English in her looks."

"Well, well, we will consider of it," said Andrew again. "Have you said aught to my mother?"

"No, I wished first to see the house."

The project was broached to my aunt that evening. I was not present, but my mother told me that though Aunt Amy said many kind things and made many hospitable objections, it was plain that she was not sorry to consent. So the next day it was all settled, and we began to make our arrangements. Rosamond was struck with consternation on hearing of it, and could not be reconciled till my mother reminded her that she could come over twice or thrice a week to her Italian and French lessons.

"But you won't give up the school, will you, Vevette?" said Meg. "I don't know what I shall do without your help?"

"Oh, no; I can walk from the Well House as well as from here."

"But the way is very lonely, and you must pass the Pisky Bank going and coming," said Margaret. "Won't you be afraid?"

"No, I don't believe I shall," said I. "I have never disobliged the pixies, and I don't see why they should disoblige me."

"But there is the place where the smuggler was killed," objected Rosamond.

"Well, if he is killed he can do no harm. I should not like to meet a live smuggler, but I don't see how one who was killed forty years ago can hurt me."

"Vevette does not believe in ghosts," said Betty.

"I would not say that exactly," I returned. "There are many such stories which seem to rest on good proof. But I think we of the reformed faith in France do not fear such things as much as people do here. Our preachers teach us that overmuch terror of ghosts and the like argues somewhat of a distrust in the care of our Heavenly Father. I have been in many very ghostly places, and at ghostly hours too, as Andrew knows, but I never saw anything more alarming than owls, bats, and spiders. We had a ghost in the château, but I was not nearly so much afraid of the white chevalier as I was of the village priest."

"Well, I don't pretend to be above all human weakness myself," said Betty.

"That is a good thing, my dear, for no one would believe you if you did," interrupted Andrew.

"You are very civil, to take the words out of my mouth," returned Betty. "I suppose that is French politeness, of which we hear so much. I mean to say that I do not hold myself to be wiser than all my elders, and than the rector himself, who believes in ghosts, and is very powerful in laying them. Why, he is sent for all along the coast, even to the Land's End and clear into Devonshire, for that purpose."

"I should think he would clear his own parish, then," said I, rather flippantly.

"But, Vevette, I really did see something on the path to the Well House one evening," said Rosamond, who had not yet spoken. "It was only last Tuesday. I had been down to the shore with a basket for old Madge, and was coming up again, slowly, when just at the turn of the road I saw a man and a woman walking slowly along. The woman had a veil over her head and a dark gray gown like Betty's homespun, and the gentleman was tall and slim and wore a gray cloak. I wondered who they could be, but I never thought of their being anything uncommon till I came up near them; and behold, they were gone like a flash!"

"Perhaps they had slipped aside into the bushes," said I. "There is a ruined cottage close by; perhaps they went into that. Did you look to see?"

"Look into Torden's cottage!" said Rosamond, aghast at the very idea. "No indeed; I ran home as fast as I could."

"And wisely too," said Andrew. "But what like was this ghostly gallant?"

"I did not see his face, but he was tall and slim, with a fair love-lock, which slipped out from under his cloak. That was all I noticed, but somehow he made me think of young Mr. Lovel."

"What nonsense is this!" said Betty angrily. "Rosamond saw one of the village maids out courseying with her lad. Every one knows she fears her own shadows."

Betty spoke with so much heat that we all looked at her in surprise, and a kind of undefined suspicion darted through my mind and was forgotten the next minute.

"Well, then, if I am afraid I will set up a rival cottage down at the shore, and so put Meg's into the shade," said I, laughing. "There are old Madge's grandchildren, and the Polwhele brood, and the Widow Barker's two maids. That would make a very decent school."

"Yes, a pretty return that would be to Meg for letting you help her," said Betty, who was thoroughly out of humor, as it seemed. "I ever thought she would find a cuckoo in her nest."

"Indeed, I think it would be a capital thing," said Margaret. "It is a long way for the little children to come, and they make every rain an excuse for staying away. I should hate to lose her from the school at the hamlet, too."

"There is no hurry," I replied. "I have not yet served out my apprenticeship. I am your scholar, Meg, as much as little Peggy is mine."

"Very humble, truly," said Betty sarcastically, and there the matter ended.

When I was again alone Rosamond's tale and Betty's discomposure thereat again recurred to my mind, and I wondered what interest she could have in the matter. But I finally reflected that it was one of her bad days, when she was wont to find matter for annoyance in the simplest occurrence, and dismissing the matter from my mind I fell to thinking over another, much more important to me, namely, whether Andrew meant to ask me once more to marry him before he set sail, and if so, what I should say to him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOOK.

It was settled that we were to remove the next week, and Jeanne and Simon with us, for they would by no means consent to stay behind. Simon was to have charge of the out-of-door matters, the cows and pony, and Jeanne of the dairy, while Dinah was to fill the post of housekeeper and waiting gentlewoman, with the eldest girl in the village school for a maid under her. This was as much of an establishment as my mother thought prudent, considering our means, though Aunt Amy was very pressing with us to take another maid in the house. She was very kind, and would have given us half the fine linen and blankets at the Court, and enough of comfits, wine, and other provisions for an army; and she was even inclined to be angry with my mother for accepting so little. However, all was settled amicably, and seeing how obliging she was I ventured to prefer a humble request that she would lend me the old French cabinet in my room—a request which she granted with alacrity, and added thereto the gift of a small Persian carpet which I greatly admired.

But I was not destined to leave Tre Madoc Court without a more serious trouble, which trouble could never have fallen upon me but for my own want of frankness, and that double-mindedness which was always my bane. I mentioned that my Aunt Jem had given me as a parting present a book of plays and poems, and that I had never showed this book to my mother. In truth, my first concealment had arisen rather from timidity and embarrassment than from wilful deception. I did not quite know what to do with the book, not liking to refuse it for fear of hurting Aunt Jem, of whom I was very fond, and I felt quite sure maman would not let me keep it if she knew. Of course the straight road would have been, as it ever is, the right one, but I took that middle way of compromise, which is never the right one, as I may say, and put the book at the bottom of my mail, with a half resolve to show it to my mother at the first opportunity. But in truth, in the surprise and joy of meeting Simon and Jeanne and the excitement of travelling and settling in our new home, I quite forgot it. When I came to unpack my mail I found it. Betty was in the room, and asked what it was, and I told her its history.

"Have you not read it?" she asked, seizing and opening it. "It looks delightful."

"No, I have not read it, and shall not till I show it to maman," I answered.

"Then let me have it—do!" said Betty, turning it over with eager interest; "or we will read it together. I am sure Aunt Jem would not give you a wicked book, though she may not be so strait-laced as my Aunt Margaret. Come, let us read it together. Your things are all put away, and my aunt is with my mother in the still-room, so she will not want you. Let us sit down in the window and read."

"I did not know Betty as well then as I came to know her afterward, and I really had some curiosity about the book, which was partly writ by that Mr. Dryden, who hath since made a great noise in the world. The first poem was certainly very beautiful, and innocent enough, so far as I understood it. The next was a play.

"Indeed I cannot read any more, Betty," said I; "and you ought not either, till you ask your mother."

"Well, let me take the book, then," said Betty. "I will not hurt it, and I don't believe it will hurt me."

I refused plumply, but at that moment my mother called me to come and see some curious china-ware which she had found in looking over the house with my aunt. When I returned Betty had taken away the book, and I could not get it of her again, though I had more than once asked her for it. It was now returned on my hands, with a witness.

A day before we left the Court we were all sitting in the cedar parlor—that is, my mother, Meg, Rosamond, and I—busy in finishing a certain worked coverlet which my aunt had had in hand a long time, and which she wished to give my mother for a parting present. Andrew was reading to us out of an English chronicle, but I fear we young ones cared more about the flowers on our work than about the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster. I can see at this moment the daisy with pink edges and a yellow centre on which I was bestowing all my skill, when we were all startled by the entrance of Aunt Amy, evidently in a high state of excitement. I thought I should like to sink into the earth when I saw in her hand that identical red leather and gilded book which I had lent Betty, or rather which she had taken for herself.

"So, sister D'Antin!" said my aunt, in her rare tone of excitement, "this is the way your daughter rewards my hospitality—for I won't say *you*, though I must say, knowing what she was, I think you might have looked out for her—bringing her vile and corrupting books into a decent house, and lending them to my innocent maids. This is what one gets for one's goodness in taking in—"

"*Mother!*" said Andrew, more sternly than I ever heard him speak to her before or afterward.

"Oh, you may say *mother* as much as you please, son; but I wish your father had taken my advice and looked out a good honest Cornish maid for you, instead of betrothing you to a French mademoiselle whom none of us knew, to bring her corruptions in here. Just look at this book which she lent Betty, and told her not to tell her mother, and which the poor child just now came and brought me, confessing with shame and tears how wicked she had been. Just look at it, that is all!" and she flung it on the ground as if it had been a snake or spider. Andrew took it up, looked at one or two places, and then, with a glance I shall never forget, he gave it to me. My mother took it from my unresisting hand.

"What does this mean, Vevette?" said she. "Where did this book come from?"

"My Aunt Jemima gave it to me," I answered, hardly able to speak.

"And you concealed it from me? Oh, my daughter!"

"Of course she concealed it," said my aunt triumphantly.

"Let Vevette speak, mother, since you have chosen to make this matter public, in what I must needs call an ill-judged manner," said Andrew, in that calm voice of authority which will be heard. "How was it, Vevette?"

I tried to explain, but between my own shame and confusion and my aunt's interruptions I am conscious that I made but a lame business of it. I did manage to say, however, that though I sat down and read the first poem with Betty, I had refused to read any more, and that I had absolutely refused to lend the book to Betty, who had taken it without leave.

"Yes, I know all about that!" said my aunt.

"Betty told me herself, poor wretch, that you told her you would not *lend* it to her; but can you deny that you went away and left the book in her hands? Can you deny that you were angry with her, and reproached her for telling me of your private courseying about London, and London fine gallants, and other things that young maids should not know, much less tell on? You are an adder and a viper—that you are! and come of viper's brood—nasty, frog-eating French!"

My mother rose. "With your leave, sister Corbet, we will withdraw," said she, assuming the chatelaine, as she well knew how. "I shall not justify my child till I hear from her all the circumstances of this unlucky affair. Nephew Andrew, I will thank you to order the pony."

"The pony—and for what?" asked my aunt, cooling down, as she always did when my mother took this tone.

"That I may withdraw to my own house, since I am so happy as to have one," replied my mother. "When this matter is cleared up, sister Corbet, you shall have all proper explanations and apologies. In the mean time 'tis neither for your dignity or mine that I should remain longer under a roof where such language has been applied to me and mine. I thank you from my heart for your hospitality, but I can partake of it—no, not an hour longer."

My aunt, upon this, began to cry, and to retract what she had said.

"I did not mean *you*, sister D'Antin—and perhaps it was not so bad; but you see she does not deny that she had the book, and that Betty got it from her—and I know I am hasty when I am roused; and the French do eat frogs, for you told me yourself; and you said they were good—you know you did, sister D'Antin. And Betty *is* artful, I confess; but that does not make it right for Vevette to lend her bad books, nor for Andrew to look at me so, as if—and I am sure I am his own natural mother and not a stranger, and 'tis unknown the trouble I had in rearing him, because he was a May babe, and my mother said he would never be lucky."

"Mother and my aunt," said Andrew, in his grave, commanding tones, "will you be so good as to let this matter rest for to-night? It hath been made far too public already. Aunt, if I have ever done you any service, I beseech you to remain under my roof till to-morrow." (I never heard Andrew say *my* roof before.)

"Yes, do," said my aunt, who had cooled rapidly, as usual. "Indeed I regret that I was so hasty; and I will take back all I said about vipers and adders."

My mother suffered herself to be prevailed upon so far as to say she would remain till the time originally set for her departure. Then she withdrew to her room, and I followed, like one going to execution. Once there she addressed me in a tone which I had never heard from her but once before, requiring me to give her a full account of this transaction. I fell down on my knees before her, and told her the whole story from beginning to end.

"How shall I believe you? You have already deceived me," said she sadly.

"Indeed, maman, I have now told you the truth," said I, weeping. "I only read the first poem in the book, and then I would go no farther. And I did not lend it to Betty. She took it from the room when you called me to look at the china, and I never could get it again, though I asked her for it ever so many times. Oh, maman, do believe me!"

"Vevette," said she, laying her hand on my shoulder, and looking me through and through as I knelt before her, "as you hope ever to meet your father again, tell me the truth. Have you any more of these books?"

"No, maman, not one."

"Have you ever had any of them since I forbade you reading them?"

"Yes, maman, I had two or three that my Uncle Charles sent to the tower, but the day before we went to the Supper in the old grange I burned them, every one."

"And you have not read the rest of this book?"

"No, maman, only the first poem, in which there was no harm. Betty wanted to read on, but I would not. Oh, maman, do forgive me!"

"I forgive you, my child, but you have grieved me to the heart," said my mother. "Go to your room, and pray for forgiveness and cleansing. Do not leave it this night. By and by, when I am rested, we will talk farther."

I retired to my own room, feeling as miserable as any girl of my age ever felt in the world, and that is saying much, for the capacities of such girls for misery are very great. It seemed to me as though I could never be happy again. In all my little difficulties with my aunt and Betty heretofore, Andrew had always been on my side; but now he too had turned against me. How plainly I could see the look he gave me when he handed me that detestable book—a look full of anger and grief. I knew that he hated lying above all things. It was the only sin with which he seemed to have no patience. I had not told a lie in words, to be sure, but I had been guilty of deception, and that was enough for him. Now that I had lost him, or thought I had, I felt how dear he was to me. I had lost his respect, and I felt sure that all comfort was at an end between us, even though he should feel bound to fulfil his contract. One thing I made up my mind to—I would never be his wife if he showed the least unwillingness to marry me. And then I remembered how pleased he had been when I spoke of our living together on a desert island, and for the first time I burst into tears.

I wept for a long time, thus lightening my heart a little, and then taking up my Bible I tried to read myself into some sort of quietness. I had just begun to breathe without sobbing when some one knocked at the door. I opened it, with my heart throbbing at the thought that it might be Andrew, and there stood Betty, her eyes cast down with that affectation of meekness I knew so well, and carrying in her hands a tray laden with good things.

"I have brought you some supper," said she, in her silver tones. "I thought perhaps you would not care to come down."

"Oh, you did! You are very considerate," I said bitterly. "You did not come at all to triumph in the mischief you have made by your lies."

"Why, Vevette," said she, in a tone of astonishment; "what do you mean? I am sure I did not mean to do you any harm, but only to relieve my own mind. I can't endure to have secrets from my mother."

All at once Rosamond's ghost story darted into my mind. When the devil puts such a weapon into the hand of a person in a passion, that person is very apt to use it without thought of consequences.

"Oh, you cannot! Then perhaps you have told your mother of the pair of ghosts Rosamond saw disappear near Torden's cottage, one of which had on a gray homespun gown, and the other looked so much like young Mr. Lovel. I think I will tell Mr. Dawson about these ghosts, that he may keep a lookout for them, since he is so skilful in dealing with that sort of gentry."

Betty turned white, or rather gray, for a moment, and nearly let her tray fall. Then she recovered herself and said quietly,

"I don't think I would tell any more tales if I were you. You would not be likely to gain much credit just now. I came to make friends with you."

"That is false!" I interrupted her. "You came to triumph over me."

"I came to make friends with you," she continued calmly; "but if you choose to treat me as an enemy, you can do so. I pity you, Vevette, and I do not blame you as much as I do those who have brought you up in such ways. Your conduct just shows what that religion is worth of which we have heard so much."

In a quarrel, the person who has no conscience always has an advantage over the person who has one. Betty had certainly got the best of it in this case, notwithstanding the stab I had given her. I shut the door in her face, and again sat down to try to compose my thoughts, but I did not find it so easy. Revenge is like the little book of the prophet, in that though it may be sweet in the mouth it is very bitter of digestion. I had struck a telling blow, it was true, but I had gotten it back with interest, and the worst of it was that in this instance Betty had some truth on her side. I *was* a discredit to the parents who had brought me up, and the religion in which I had been educated. I had brought shame on my dear mother as well as myself.

Betty had indeed done me a cruel mischief, and that not only in the trap she had so artfully laid for me, and into which I had so foolishly walked, like a silly hare into a springe, but in coming to enjoy her triumph as she had just done; for that such was her motive I did not doubt then, nor do I now. She had drawn toward her that anger which I had hitherto directed toward myself, and roused in me a spirit of anger and revenge. I felt as if I could have killed her. In this state of mind my mother found me when she came in to talk to me later in the evening, nor did all her expostulations avail to draw me out of it. I was ready to beg her pardon in the very dust, and to make my submission to my aunt, but I could not and would not forgive Betty; nay, I would not even say I would try.

"Then you must yourself remain unforgiven, my poor child," said my mother; "under the anger of that Heavenly Father whom you have offended. Can you afford that? Will you still further grieve that kind and tender Divine Friend whom you have so deeply grieved already?"

If I had spoken out the thought that was in my heart I should have said that I did not believe that Friend loved me so very much, or he would not have suffered this trouble to come upon me just when I was trying to be so very good; but this I did not dare to say.

"I cannot help it, maman," I answered her at last. "I never, never can forgive Betty for the part she has acted. She has been ten times worse than I, and nobody seems to blame her at all. You don't mind her coming here to triumph over me—bringing me a tray forsooth! as if I did not know that she will never wait upon any one if she can help it. You don't mind how much I am insulted!"

It showed how I was carried out of myself that I dared speak so to my mother. I was scared when the words were out of my mouth. But my mother was one who knew when to reprove and punish and when to soothe and comfort. She saw that I was almost beside myself with anger and excitement—a mood, I must say, which was rare in me.

"We will talk no more to-night," said she. "You had better try to calm yourself, and to sleep. My poor little maid, I thought I was bringing you to a safe nest when I refused to leave you in London. But there are temptations everywhere, since there is no earthly state from which the world, the flesh, and the devil can be kept out. Go to bed, my Vevette, and remember, though thou canst not or wilt not pray for thyself, thy mother is praying for thee."

With that she kissed me and returned to her own room. I burst into fresh tears, and cried till I could cry no more, and then, feeling my heart a little lightened, I was preparing to undress when some one tapped softly at the door, and a low voice said,

"Vevette!"

"Who is there?" I asked.

"Rosamond," was the answer. "Please let me in. I have brought you a cup of milk and some bread."

I could not resist the pleading tones, and I opened the door. Rosamond had been crying as bitterly as myself, and as she came into the room she set down her burden and clasping me in her arms she kissed me and cried again. My tears flowed too, but they were cool tears now, and refreshed my burning eyes.

"Dear Rosamond, you won't turn against me, will you?" said I.

"No indeed," she answered warmly, and then added, "Of course you know I must think it was wrong for you to keep the book, and to read ever so little, when you knew your mother would not allow it. But every one does wrong sometimes. If we were not sinners the dear Lord would not have needed to come down and die for us."

Somehow these simple words did more to calm my heart, and to show me my sin at the same time, than anything had done before. The dear Lord had died for me, and this was the way I had repaid him. He was ready to forgive me, and yet I would not forgive Betty. I began to see things in a new light."

"I know I was very wrong," said I, "and I *am* sorry—indeed I am. But, Rosamond, it was not so bad. I did not lend Betty the book: I told her she should not have it; but maman called me, and when I came back she was gone. I have tried again and again to get it out of her hands, and then I meant to burn it up. But what is the use of talking, since nobody will believe me?"

"I believe you," said Rosamond; "I believe every word you say. But don't you see that even then, if you had gone to your mother and laid the whole before her, all this would not have happened? She might have been displeased, 'tis true; but she would have forgiven you and got back the book, and all would have ended well by this time."

"It is true," I answered. "I wish I had done as you say."

"I think the very most straightforward way is always the best way, especially when one is dealing with one like—like Betty," continued Rosamond. "There is nothing which deceitful people understand so little as truth. But, Vevette, if you are sorry, it will all come right in the end. Let us kneel down and say the fifty-first Psalm together, and I am sure you will feel better."

We did so, and then the dear maid repeated the thirty second Psalm. She was like the holy well at St. Wenna's, which ran with a clear but small stream, while now and then came a great rush of bright water, bubbling up through the white pebbles and showing for a moment the crystal depth below. I had always loved her from the first of our acquaintance, but from that hour began a friendship which will never end.

We kissed each other on our knees and then rose.

"Do eat a morsel," said Rosamond. "You have had no supper, and you will be ill to-morrow."

I tried, in complaisance to her, but I could not manage it.

"I cannot eat," said I; "but oh, Rosamond, I am so thirsty."

"I will bring you some cool water from the well in the court," said she, and taking a jug she was gone before I could object. When she came back she looked startled.

"Do you know, Vevette, I am sure I saw that same figure that I saw before near Torden's cottage with the woman. It was just under the archway, as plain as could be against the sky, and it slipped away just as before. Who or what can it be?"

"Some one hanging about after one of the maids, perhaps," said I, though I had my own thoughts upon the matter. "Now you must not stay any longer or my aunt will be angry and think I am corrupting you."

"Oh, no, she won't," answered Rosamond. "I asked her if I might come, and she said yes, and wanted me to bring you all kinds of nice things, but I thought you would not care for them. I think she is very sorry she made such an ado about the matter, now that it is over. Well, good-night, dear Vevette; I hope you will sleep."

But I could not sleep, except feverishly and by snatches, till after the birds began to sing in the morning. Then indeed I had a good nap, and waked refreshed. I washed and dressed, and went softly into my mother's room. She was already up, and kneeling before the table, on which lay, always open, her Bible, and the little worn prayer-book she brought from France. She beckoned me to kneel beside her, and we said our prayers together, as usual. Then, as we rose, she drew me to her and kissed me.

"The evil spirit has gone out—is it not so?" said she, looking into my face with a smile.

"Yes, maman, I hope so," I answered. "I am very sorry about the book, and I will try to forgive Betty."

"That is spoken well, my child; and now I must tell you that I think you have been somewhat hardly dealt by in this matter. Looking it over coolly, I can see that I did not make enough allowance for indecision and embarrassment on your part, after you received the book."

"Indeed and truly, maman, I meant to show you the book, but I quite forgot it till we came here. Then when Betty carried it off I did not know what to do."

"There was but one thing to do, and that was to come and tell me all about it," said my mother. "That would have saved all the trouble."

"So Rosamond said. Oh, maman, she was so good last night."

"She is a dear maid," said my mother; "by far the best of the three."

"Better than Margaret?" said I, surprised, for I had looked upon Meg as a pattern of all excellence.

"Yes, because she is truly humble-minded—a rare and most precious quality. She is truly poor in spirit, while Meg, with all her good qualities—but we will not discuss the faults of others. Now, do you know what is to be done next?"

"I must go to my aunt and tell her that I am sorry," said I; "but, maman, what shall I say? I cannot say that I am sorry for lending Betty the book, for I did not lend it to her—she took it."

"Tell her just how it was, and say you are sorry for bringing the book here. I will go with you if it will make matters easier."

We found my aunt in the still-room—luckily alone—pussing over some peppermint she was distilling.

"Do see here, Margaret," said she, as we entered. "What ails this peppermint? See how foul it runs."

"The still is too hot, I think," said my mother, examining it; "and your peppermint is rather old. I should begin again, and with some smaller shoots. But, sister, Vevette hath something to say to you."

"About what?" asked my aunt absently, still busy with the refractory still; and then, recollecting herself, "Oh, about the book. Well, then, child, I forgive you, only don't do it again. I know I was warm myself, and said too much, but that is only my way. There, run, that's a good maid, and cut me some nice lengths of the peppermint. You have more sense about gathering of herbs than any of the others—only don't draggle your petticoats. Why, what ails the child?" catching sight of my face. "She looks as if she had had an illness."

"She has been very much distressed about this affair," said my mother; "and so have I; but I think if I were to explain the matter to you as she has done to me—"

"Oh, let bygones be bygones," interrupted my aunt. "I hate explanations; and, as I said, I was over-warm. Do you want to cut the herbs, child? Do just as you please."

"Yes, aunt, I shall like it," I answered, glad of an excuse to get into the fresh air. I was at once pleased and vexed that my aunt should make so little of the matter. I went down to the peppermint-bed which grew under the shade of a yew hedge, and was busy choosing out the very best shoots when I heard voices on the other side of the hedge.

"I shall never ask her to help in the school again—never!" said Margaret. "I could not forgive myself if she should corrupt the children."

"If it had been anything else," said Andrew, in a voice of deep dejection; "anything but deception."

"To read such a wicked book, too," said Margaret.

"How do you know it was so very wicked, after all?" asked Rosamond.

"Oh, I looked at it last night as it lay on the table," said Margaret, quite sedately.

"If I knew it was so wicked I would not have looked at it at all," said Rosamond. "And you know she said she only read the first poem, in which there was no harm."

"Yes, but who can ever believe her? I know *I* shall never trust her again. When I have found any one out once, there is the end of it with me."

"According to your own account you are just as bad as Vevette," said Rosamond; "that is, if you don't tell lies every day."

"Rosamond, what do you mean?" said Margaret, in a voice of amazement that almost made me laugh aloud. "*I* as bad as Vevette?"

"According to your own showing," returned Rosamond, in the same matter-of-fact way. "Don't you say every day of your life that you have done the things you ought not to have done, and left undone the things you ought to have done—that there is no health in you, and you are a miserable sinner? I don't know what Vevette could say of herself worse than that."

"Rosamond, you are very pert," said Meg, and I could tell by her voice that she was offended. "Of course one says those things because they are in the prayers of the church, and the Bible says we are all sinners; but I should like to know wherein I fail in my duty. Do *I* ever tell lies, or read bad books, or miss my church or sacrament? Don't I—" Here she stopped, in a little confusion as it seemed, thinking, I fancy, that it was not quite seemly thus to blazon her good deeds, however highly she might rate them.

"Then if you never do wrong or omit to do good, why do you say you do?" persisted Rosamond. "Is that telling the truth? Take care, sister! It was the publican who went down to hi house justified, rather than the man who thanked God he was not as other men."

"You are very impertinent to lecture your elder sister in this way," returned Margaret. "I shall speak to my mother;" and she walked away.

"I believe you are in the right, Rosamond," said Andrew. "We have been too hard on the poor child. If it were anything but deception!"

"I do not read in Scripture that one sin is worse than another," returned Rosamond. "The Bible saith not so, but that he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. Besides—"

I did not care to hear more. Indeed I had not heard so much, only the yew walk was my way to the house, and I had been waiting hoping they would pass on. I now rose up, and passing through the archway I went on my way, giving a kind good-morning to Rosamond and courtesying to Andrew in passing. He would have spoken, I believe, but I did not give him the chance. When I entered the still-room I heard my aunt say, in a tone of some annoyance,

"Well, well, sister, we will let the matter rest. It is natural you should justify your own daughter as far as you can. I have told the young ones to say no more, and to treat their cousin kindly. So here she comes. Well, you have got a little color, child, in the fresh air. Yes, that is very nice. You are one who can mind what you are about, and will make a good housewife for all that is come and gone. There is a piece of gingerbread for you, and you had better take a cup of cream for your breakfast ; you look but poorly. I think, sister, I will give Vevette the small still, and then she will not forget what she has learned."

CHAPTER XIV.

A WEDDING.

I THINK Margaret really did try to meet me as usual, but of course she did not succeed. She had been vexed at Rosamond for having so much the best of it in their little argument, and I fancy too she found her usual self-complacency a little disturbed ; so she was very stately. Andrew did not say much, but he was kind, and would have liked to help me to everything on the table. Betty was demure and silent, with eyes cast down, though I fancied I now and then caught her regarding me with some anxiety. I suppose she would have liked to find out how much I did know, or whether I knew anything. In good sooth I did not know anything, but I must needs own that my suspicions were strong, and grew stronger the more I considered the matter. In the beginning of our acquaintance Betty had been much disposed to make a confidante of me, and she herself had told me that Mr. Lovel had been a suitor for her hand, but that her mother had rejected him because he was a spendthrift, and had no good character in other respects, besides being a total unbeliever—a fashion just then much affected by a certain class of men who wished to appear strong-minded and learned at small cost. I could see that Betty was well enough disposed toward him—indeed she said so; and our first breach came from my saying I wondered she could think of such a person for a husband. I expressed myself pretty warmly on the subject, at which she was very much vexed, and said some sharp things in her turn. However, we made up the quarrel, but when Betty began to talk of him again I, with a degree of prudence rather to be wondered at, positively refused to hear, telling her that since her mother and brother were opposed to the match, and with such good reason, she ought not to allow her thoughts to dwell upon the subject, but to conquer her regard for Mr. Lovel, if she had any. This little lecture completed the breach between us, and from that time Betty never lost a chance of vexing and injuring me, though she managed her matters with such adroitness that even Andrew did not see through them, and I began to wonder in myself whether I was not growing touchy and ill-natured.

As soon as breakfast was over my mother and myself retired to our apartment, to finish our preparations for the removal to the Well House. They were not many, for most of our goods were sent thither already, and the house having been kept in such nice order there was but little to do. My aunt, on her part, was busy among her storerooms and presses, and we presently saw old Matt driving the laden donkey before him, and carrying as many baskets as would have loaded another. We meant to have gone away directly after breakfast, but aunt was most earnest with us to stay to dinner and partake of the feast which had been put in hand before the unlucky business of the book. So, though I at least was impatient to be gone, we consented to remain. What a feast it was, to be sure! What jellies and creams and tarts and pies of every sort and kind! (The Cornish folk are famous for pies, and 'tis said that the devil never dared to come into Cornwall lest they should take a fancy to "a devilly pie." This, however, is not true. He is just as busy in Cornwall as anywhere else.) We all parted good friends, and I forced myself to bid a civil adieu to Betty. Aunt Amy was careful to put into each of our hands a package of cakes and comfits, that we might not enter our new home empty-handed and thus bring scarcity upon it. Andrew walked at my mother's bridle-rein, as usual, and Rosamond and I walked together. Simon and Jeanne had preceded us.

When we reached the house-door Andrew assisted my mother to alight, and then he and Rosamond took a kind leave of us. He saluted me as usual, but there was a change in his manner toward me which I felt bitterly enough, though I had too much maidenly pride to show it. Then they returned home, and we entered our new house together. Dinah and Jeanne were in the hall to welcome us, and had made a cheerful little fire upon the hearth of our sitting-room, for though the summer was in its prime the evening was cool, and a little mist was drifting up from the sea.

"The place seems home-like, does it not, my Vevette?" said my mother. "I must say I am not sorry to be in my own house once more. Ah, if your father were but here!"

"He is in a better home than this, maman," I ventured to say.

"True, my child, and we will not wish to call him back again. We shall go to him, but he will not return to us."

She kissed me, and we stood a moment in silence. Then my mother roused herself and proposed that we should go through the house.

We found everything in beautiful order, and had occasion at every step to admire my aunt's generosity and Andrew's thoughtfulness. There was abundance of fine linen and of blankets and everything in the housekeeping line that could be needed. Dinah displayed with delight the service of real china, and the silver salts, and the dredgers for pepper and spices, and the pots upon pots of preserves and honey which my aunt had provided. My room opened from my mother's, and contained the old French cabinet I had so much admired, and also a little clock, which I knew had been one of Rosamond's chief treasures. From Meg, and marked with her name, was a pretty coverlet of silk patchwork—a kind of work very fashionable at that time, and in which Meg excelled, as she did in most things. From Betty there was a worked cushion, which I am afraid I was spiteful enough to throw into the darkest corner of the closet. From Andrew I had some beautiful china and the loveliest little work-table that could be, besides a case with doors, which being opened I found to contain a portrait of himself, which I suppose he had had painted in London. It was beautifully done, and looked at me with his very eyes and expression—a kind of smiling gravity. The kitchens and offices were filled up with every convenience, and we found Jeanne quite in ecstasies over her little dairy and her two fine cows—one a long-horned Devon, the other a comical little black Welsh cow with no horns at all.

"Ah, madame, had I but a Normandy brass jar for milking in I should be quite happy," said the good woman. "To think what beautiful milk-jars I had, and how they are all fallen into the hands of the Philistines, as it were!"

"Ah, my poor Jeanne, if it were only the milk-jars that had fallen into the hands of the Philistines!" said old Simon. "But we must be thankful that we have been so kindly dealt by in this strange land. Will madame come to the stable and look at the horses?"

"Horses! what horses?" asked my mother, in surprise.

"The two saddle-horses, madame, and the pony for mamselle, and the donkey. Indeed they are nice creatures. Monsieur Corbet recommended the gray for madame's riding, and the pony is as pretty and gentle a creature for a young lady as I ever saw. Monsieur has been training it for this fortnight."

Of course we must go to see them, and I was in ecstasies over my pony, but my mother looked a little grave.

"Andrew overloads us with benefits," said she. "I must talk with him about these same horses. The obligation is almost too great. But never mind, my Vevette; enjoy your pretty Blanche. See how she stoops her head to be petted!"

We returned to the house to find supper served, and Dinah, who had stepped easily enough into the place of waiting gentlewoman, standing behind my mother's chair. We had been a little afraid Jeanne's feelings might be wounded by this arrangement, but she fell into it more than contentedly. She was born a cook, and her delight in having such a neat kitchen to rule in her own way overcame every other consideration. Simon had had great pleasure in putting to rights the rather overgrown garden, which was now a picture of neatness, and he declared he could easily take care both of that and the garden at the Court till such time as Andrew could suit himself with a gardener.

The next day was mine at the school, but I did not go thither, being resolved, after all I had heard, never to set foot therein till Margaret came and asked me. With the help of the pins Andrew had made I had got three or four of the elder girls, along with Peggy Mellish, nicely started in knitting. Now, as I have said, Margaret could do most things better than any one else ; but she had never known how to knit till she had learned it of me, and she was by no means quick at it. The truth was, she had expected to take up the art at once and knit at the very first start as fast and as well as I did, and when she found that she must needs begin as slowly as one of the maids at the school, and that she dropped stitches and split threads when she tried to knit fast, she was a good deal out of patience. I must needs confess that it gave me a little wicked pleasure to think of the embarrassment she would fall into over the knitting.

I busied myself all the morning in arranging our affairs and in looking over the house and grounds. I made various interesting discoveries—of an old carved spinning-wheel, which I determined at once to have put to rights ; of various odd bits of tapestry and hangings ; and last, but not least, a light closet full of books. A great many of them were books of divinity, in which I took little interest, but among the other volumes I found Stowe's "Annals," my old friends the "Arcadia" and Hackluyt's "Voyages," a volume of Shakespeare's plays, and the whole of Spenser's "Fairy Queen," of which I had read only one odd volume. Mindful of my late troubles, I did not open one of these books till I told my mother of them and asked her consent.

"I will look them over and then tell you," said my mother.

"You will find no ill in them, madame, I venture to say," observed Dinah. "Those books mostly belonged to my honored father, and I do not believe there is one from which my young lady would take any harm."

"Then, if the books belonged to your father, they are yours now," I observed.

"You know he was not really my father," answered Dinah. "I was but a foundling, and could, inherit nothing, and he never made a will. I have kept his books and some other things as it were in trust, till the rightful heir should appear to claim them. At all events, you and Mrs. Vevette are quite welcome to the use of any of the books."

"You do not remember anything of what your life was before you came here, I suppose," said my mother.

"No, madame, not with any distinctness. I recollect dimly a fine mansion-house or castle, and a room hung with tapestry. I remember a lady who used to pet me and teach me verses and prayers. Then I recollect being taken from my bed in the dark, hastily wrapped in my clothes and told not to cry, and being carried abroad in the night. After that all is confusion till I came here."

"That is like our own escape," remarked my mother.

"Yes, madame, and I think it likely that my parents may also have been among those who had to fly for their lives. But who they were or what has become of them will, I suppose, always remain a mystery."

"You say your mother, or the lady you remember, taught you verses. Can you recollect any of them?" asked my mother.

"Only a line or two, madame," and she repeated a few lines, which my mother recognized instantly.

"Why, that is the beginning of the 'Noble Lesson,' one of the most honored symbols of the Vaudois!" said she. "My husband could repeat it from end to end, and so can I, if I have not forgotten." And she repeated a number of lines in the same language which is that still spoken in the Vaudois vales, and to some extent in Provence. I never saw any one more delighted than our poor little lady-in-waiting at this unexpected discovery. She had always liked my mother and me, but now she seemed ready to kiss the very hem of our garments. She showed us the little golden dove she had worn around her neck. It seemed as if made to open, but we could not find the way to do it. My mother said a dove in silver or gold was a very common ornament among the Protestants of Provence and Languedoc, to some family of which she now believed Dinah to belong.

Of course this discovery bound us all the more closely together. Jeanne was delighted, and would fain have recalled for Dinah's benefit her native tongue, but Dinah could only remember the few words she had repeated to us.

That afternoon my mother would go down to the shore and see the poor fishermen's families, several of whom lived at the entrance of the coombe. We found them rude enough in their manner of living, of course, but courteous, and pleased with our visit, especially old Dame Madge, who had known my mother when a girl, and who was vehement in her expressions of delight at having her so near.

"But, do tell, madame; is it true that you have taken Dinah to be your waiting-woman?"

"Quite true. Why not?" asked my mother. "She is most skilful with her needle, and well bred, and I think myself fortunate in keeping her about me."

"And do you think then, madame, that she is a natural-born woman, and no sea-maid? They say down here that she can go back into the sea whenever she pleases and bring back the finest fish. Why, my son-in-law—and a fine good lad he is, and like an own son to me, though my poor daughter, his wife, only lived with him four years before she died of a waste—my son-in-law says that she once asked him for some fish for her father, as she called him. And Ben said he had none, but if the old gentleman was ill and fancied fish, he would go out and try what he could do, and she thanked him and said he was very kind; and if you will believe me, madame, though he had had the worst of luck for ever so long, that night he had the best catch ever he made. I can tell you, we were all ready to please Dinah after that. And she knows more about herbs than any one I ever saw—more than she ought, some think—though she says she learned it all out of a book she has. Never was anything like the medicine she made for my poor child's cough."

"It seems, then, that she uses her knowledge to good purpose," said my mother, smiling. "No, dame, I do not think her a sea-dame, but the child of some one wrecked upon the coast."

"Ah, well, no doubt you know best, madame. Anyhow, she does naught but good that we know on, and 'tis best to be on the right side of such creatures."

We went next to visit Anne Barker, who was a widow with two daughters, one of whom was lame and confined to her bed and chair, while the other was one of the best girls in Margaret's school. We found the poor thing—Lois was her name—sitting up in her great three-cornered chair, trying to knit with two slender pegs which she had made from wood. She had partly learned the stitch from her sister, and was succeeding but indifferent well. I at once sat down by her and began to give her instruction, and she soon mastered the stitch, to her great delight.

"Ah, poor maid, she is pleased enough!" said her mother. "She cannot take the spinning-wheel, and the net-making is too hard for her, so time hangs but heavily with her."

"What was the cause of her malady?" asked my mother.

"She was pisky-struck, madame. The very week after she was born the careless woman who was with me went out and left us alone, and I asleep with an unchristened babe. I was waked by a great noise, as of something running up the wall, and the next minute I heard the babe scream, and there it lay on the ground. No doubt the piskies would have carried it off altogether if I had not waked just in time. After that it never thrived, poor dear."

"Perhaps is was hurt falling from the bed," I ventured to suggest.

"But what made it fall? No, madame, it was the piskies. I had the luck to displease them by accidentally treading on a fairy ring, and no doubt they meant to have their revenge."

"You did not see them?"

"No, madame, but I heard them as plain as I hear you. A better maid than poor Lois never lived, though I say it that shouldn't, but she can do little for herself or any one else."

"Can you read?" asked my mother of Lois.

"No, madame," was the answer. "My sister hath taught me a little, but not to read a book."

"And would you like to learn?"

"Oh, yes indeed, madame. My father could read, and we have his great Bible. Dibby tells me what she hears parson read in church sometimes, and I often wish I could make it out for myself."

We sat a little while longer and then took our leave, promising to come again. When we were outside the door my mother remarked, "Well, Vevette, here is work come to your hand, and of the sort you like. Why should you not teach poor Lois to read?"

"I was going to ask you if I might," said I. "And then, perhaps, I might have some of the others. Really and truly, maman, the walk is very hard and long for the little ones, especially in bad weather."

"Well, well, we will see. Begin with poor Lois, at all events."

So I did, the very next day. My proposal to teach her was received with rapture by both mother and daughter. I had always a knack of teaching, and I soon had Lois prosperously started upon a pair of hose, and able, with some help, to make out a chapter in the Testament. Besides, I read to her every day as a reward, and I shall never forget her delight over the stories in the Gospels. But a good many things happened in the mean time.

Rosamond came down next day with her Italian book, and we had a lesson in that and in music from my mother.

The next day she came again, this time with Meg, who in rather a shamefaced way asked me whether I was not coming to the school any more.

"That depends," said I. "I thought you were not going to allow me." Then, as Meg colored, I felt sorry for her confusion, and said, "I suppose you want help about the knitting."

"I can make nothing of it," answered Meg, "and I thought—I did not know—" then she stopped, still more confused at the smile I could by no means repress. Rosamond came to her aid.

"Margaret, why not say at once that you are sorry for what you said about Vevette, and that you will be glad if she will overlook it and help you again. That is the easiest way out of the trouble."

I expected to see Meg angry, but she was not.

"Thank you, Rosamond, that *is* what I mean," said she. "I was too hasty in condemning Vevette, and I am sorry, and shall be very glad of her help. Will that be enough, cousin, or must I ask downright Dunstable here to make my peace for me?"

"That is enough, and more than enough," said I. "I will help you, of course, though I have also a pupil down here." And I told her about Lois. She was greatly pleased, and we talked again over my plan of establishing a dame-school for the little ones, under the care of the widow and her lame daughter. Margaret, with all her pride, had not an atom of venom or malice about her. Once she made up her mind to pass over a thing, that was the end of it.

"And how is Betty?" I asked.

"She is far from well, and keeps her chamber the last two days," said Margaret; "but my mother cannot tell what ails her, only she is giddy as soon as she sits up. She is very easily disturbed, and likes to stay alone best."

"I hope it is not a fever," said I.

"No, she hath no fever, and her appetite is good enough. It is only the pain and giddiness in her head. Then you will come to the school to-morrow?"

"Yes, if you desire it," said I, and so the matter was settled. We had not seen Andrew since we parted from him at the door of the house on our first arrival. Now, however, he came down to walk home with his sisters. He saluted my mother and myself as usual, and to maman he was just the same; but there was a kind of sad constraint in his manner to me which I felt at once. In my maidenly pride I was determined to show that I was not affected by it, and I chatted on with the girls, making a great deal of talk over the embroidery stitch Margaret was showing me, and laughing at my own stupidity while my heart swelled with mingled grief and anger. I thought Andrew was hard and unjust toward me, and hardness and injustice from one we love and respect is very hard to bear. I was glad when they all went away, and I could run up to my own room and relieve myself by a few bitter tears.

The next day Andrew came again, and this time with great news. There was a certain estate in Devonshire which should have descended to my mother by the will of her grandmother, but which had long been in dispute, and had threatened to eat itself up, as the saying goes, in law expenses. Andrew brought word that by the discovery of some new evidence—a later will, I believe—the matter was definitely settled, and that when our honest share of the expenses was paid the estate would be worth no less than three hundred a year to my mother and me. He proposed to go at once to Exeter to attend to the final settlement, if my mother wished it and would give him proper powers.

"But that is hardly fair," said my mother. "It will take a week or more out of your short remaining time at home."

"That does not matter," answered Andrew abruptly; and then added, "Besides, the sailing of the ship is put off another two weeks. I begin to think she will never go at all."

"Are you, then, in such a hurry to be gone?" I said, without thinking. I could have bitten my tongue with vexation a moment after.

"Sailors soon grow tired of life on shore," said he not unkindly. "The sea never lets go of any one it has once taken hold of, and you know the saying is that it always draws those whose parents it has drowned." Then, after a little silence, "Vevette, will you walk up the church-path with me? I want to show you a new plant I have found."

I was in two minds to refuse, but after a moment's consideration I agreed, and went to fetch my mantle and hood. We walked a little while in silence, enjoying the fresh evening air and the breeze perfumed with that strange, sweet scent of the cave and the moorland together which one meets nowhere but by the sea. Then Andrew said,

"Vevette, if you could tell me one thing it would ease my mind wonderfully."

"Well," said I, "what is it?"

"Was the other day the first time you—the first time—"

"The first time I ever deceived my mother?" I said, to help him out. "Was that what you want to know?" Then, as he nodded assent, "No, Andrew, it was not. When I was quite a child, not more than twelve years old, my Uncle Charles sent my mother some tales and play-books, and I stole two or three of them and read them in secret. I had them till the day before we went to the supper at the grange, and then I burned them all. Since then I have read nothing of the sort till that day Betty persuaded me to read with her the book my Aunt Jem gave me."

"And this is the whole truth!" said he. Then, as I withdrew a step and looked at him, he added eagerly, "Forgive me, Vevette, but this matter is of such great importance to me. So much depends upon it."

"So much depends upon it!" I repeated. "What?" Then, as he did not answer, I went on firmly, though with a mortal pang at my heart, "Andrew, I want you to understand one thing. If you have any doubt of me, any doubt whatever of my being worthy, if you have any hesitation in the matter, I will never consent to be your wife—never, for all the family compacts ever made in the world."

I spoke vehemently, yet with low voice, as I was apt to do when greatly moved. We had just come to a turn in the path, and before us lay the half-ruined cottage—Torden's cottage. It was a place avoided after dark, for it had an ill name on account of a wrecker who had once lived there, and who had died a fearful death. As we came in sight of it we saw two figures before us—the two whom Rosamond had described—a tall slender man in a cloak, and a female figure in a gray homespun gown. As we drew near she turned her head a very little.

Andrew gripped my hand hard. "Betty!" said he, in a hoarse whisper.

"Nonsense," I whispered in return. "Did you not say Betty was ill in bed?" But at that moment she turned her head again and I saw her face plainly. It *was* Betty. I laid a restraining hand on my cousin's arm, but he shook it off, and one stride, as it seemed, brought him to the side of the two before us. They turned at his approach, and stood for a moment in speechless confusion. Then Betty recovered her presence of mind, if such it could be called.

"Vevette, you have betrayed us," said she. "So much for trusting a French girl."

Andrew turned absolutely white as he heard these words.

"How could I betray what I never knew?" I asked, finding my voice, for at first I was dumfounded by the unexpected attack. "You never placed any confidence in me, nor did I ever desire it."

What was my amazement to hear Betty declare that I had been in her secret from the first, and had aided her in meeting with her lover. She appealed to Mr. Lovel if it were not so, and he confirmed her words with an oath. Andrew turned from her to me, with a face full of wrath and grief.

"What am I to believe?" said he.

"Believe what you like," said I, for my blood was up. "Every word that Betty says is false, and she knows it."

"Gently, my fair cousin that is to be," interposed Mr. Lovel, with a supercilious little laugh. "I do not allow such language to my betrothed bride. Mr. Corbet, methinks you and I can settle this matter better without female witnesses. Let us attend these fair ladies to their respective homes, and then we will endeavor to come to an understanding."

"Charles, remember your promise," said Betty, turning pale.

"Fear nothing, child. I shall not forget that Mr. Corbet is your brother, nor do I think we shall find it hard to come to an amicable agreement. Mrs. d'Antin, shall we turn your way first?"

"Do not discommode yourself, sir," said Andrew, with lofty courtesy. "I am able to take care both of my sister and my cousin. Perhaps you will have the goodness to call upon me to-morrow, or allow me to wait upon you wherever you are staying. For the present I must say good-night."

Mr. Lovel seemed at first ready to fly upon Andrew like an angry dog, but in a moment he restrained himself, and replied, with equal courtesy,

"To-morrow, then, at ten o'clock, I will do myself the honor of waiting upon you." And raising his hat he strode away toward the village. It seemed for a moment that Betty meant to run after him, but if so she thought better of it, and snatching her hand from Andrew's she fled toward home like a startled deer.

"Go after her; she may do something desperate," said I. "I can find my way home well enough."

So saying, I turned from him and walked deliberately down the path till I was out of sight, when I began to run, and never stopped till I found myself at home and in the arms of my mother, who had come to the door to look for me.

"What is it, my child?" she exclaimed, as I clung to her, sobbing and out of breath. "Has anything frightened you? Where is Andrew?"

As soon as I could recover composure enough to speak, I drew her into the little parlor and told her the whole story. My mother heard it in silence, but with a very troubled face.

"Oh, maman, you do not believe what Betty says," I exclaimed, as she did not speak.

"Tell me the exact truth, my child," said she. "What did Betty ever say to you on the subject? Try to remember every word."

I did so, and told her all—how Betty had spoken to me of Mr. Lovel, and, as I believed, had meant to draw me into a confidence, which I had declined. I also told her of the advice I had given on the occasion.

"That was well," said my mother. "And had you no suspicion that Betty was keeping up a connection with Mr. Lovel?"

"None at all," I told her. "The first time I ever suspected anything was when Rosamond told us of the two figures she had seen near Torden's cottage, and which she had believed to be spectres or somewhat else of supernatural."

"Why did you not mention your suspicion?" asked my mother.

"Dear maman, how could I?" I asked. "I hardly entertained it a moment. Then when I saw Betty afterward turn so white when the affair was mentioned, and when that very night Rosamond saw the same man's figure in the entrance to the court, I did think more about it; but I had no proof, and it was no concern of mine, and afterward I quite forgot it. How could I mention the affair when I had no proofs, and to whom?"

"True, you could not," said my mother; "but it is very unlucky, and I fear trouble will arise to you from the affair. My sister will believe harm of any one sooner than of her own daughters, though she knows and has said as much to me, that Betty is both malicious and deceitful. Well, my love, we must do our best, and leave the event in other hands. I believe you have been quite guiltless in the whole matter; and not only so, but that you have acted with great discretion. But, coming so soon after the affair of the book, I fear you will be blamed for what you have had no hand in."

"Then you do believe in me, maman?" I asked, kissing her hand.

"Most surely I do, my child. What did Andrew say?"

"He looked at me and asked what he was to believe, and then I told him he could believe what he pleased. He had been talking before that about the book, and asked me whether it was the first time, and I told him—what I told you, maman. Then he did not speak again till we came upon Betty and Mr. Lovel."

"Andrew shows a side of his character which does not please me," remarked my mother. "With all his good qualities there is a certain hardness about him. It was not generous in him to bring the subject up again."

I had thought the same, and I now spoke with a decision and boldness which surprised myself.

"Maman, you must let me say one thing, and please do not be angry. I will never consent to marry Andrew while he is as he is now—while he distrusts me, or shows such a coldness toward me. Nothing shall force me to it."

"Certainly *I* shall not force you to it," returned my mother, with equal decision. "My child shall never go to a cold or unwilling bridegroom."

"I wish I had never seen him," said I, and with that I fell a-weeping with such violence that my mother was alarmed. She led me up to bed herself, administered a quieting potion, and sat by me till I fell asleep. The next morning I awaked refreshed in body, but so heavily burdened in mind and heart that I shut my eyes and wished the daylight would never come. But daylight and darkness do not change to suit our moods, and I reflected that I must not add to my mother's cares ; so I rose and dressed, and tried to be composed if I could not be cheerful. We had hardly finished our breakfast when a messenger came down requesting our presence at the court. We found the whole family assembled in the cedar room, together with Mr. Lovel. Betty was pale as death, but demure and collected. Mr. Lovel was trying, with some success, to play the easy fine gentleman and man of the world. Andrew was stern and silent. The moment we entered my aunt fell upon me with violent and incoherent reproaches for leading her child astray.

"Hush, mother!" said Andrew. "Let Vevette be heard in her own defence, if she hath anything to say."

My mother drew herself up, declining the seat which Andrew placed for her. "Perhaps, nephew, you will allow her mother to understand why my child is to be put upon her defence. Of what hath she been accused, and by whom?"

"Betty says," returned Andrew, "that Vevette was in her confidence all along, and abetted her meetings with Mr. Lovel."

"She did," said Betty. "We talked of the affair when she first came here, and afterward, when she was angry about the book, she taunted me with it and threatened to tell."

"What have you to say, Vevette?" asked my mother.

I simply repeated the story just as it was.

"Can you deny that you taunted me that night with meeting Mr. Lovel?" asked Betty.

"I did not taunt you with meeting him, for I never knew for certain that you did meet him. A suspicion came into my mind, and in my anger I spoke it out."

Betty smiled superior.

"Well, all I can say is, that it was an unlucky day when you ever darkened my doors, and still more when you were betrothed to my son," said my aunt, who was one of those persons that say first and think afterward.

"Oh, mother!" said Margaret. Andrew never spoke.

"Ay, and oh mother again!" retorted my aunt. "I say it was an unlucky day, and I will say so. It is she who has led my child astray and poisoned her mind with her play-books and her fine stories of London, to an innocent country maid who had no chance to learn aught of such wickedness. She has ruined my Betty, and she will ruin my son."

"Have no fears for your son, sister Corbet," said my mother, now fully roused. "The engagement between him and my daughter is from this moment at an end. I leave your house, nor will I or my daughter ever again enter its doors till you have taken back your words. Mr. Lovel, I will thank you to see that my horse and servant are at the door.''

Mr. Lovel obeyed with all courtesy. Andrew started forward, but my mother rejected his hand with a stately bow, and leaning on my arm she left the room. Mr. Lovel assisted us both to mount—for I had ridden my pony—and proffered his services to see us safe home, which my mother declined.

"Not a word was spoken on the way. When we arrived I would have entered upon the subject, but my mother declined it.

"Not at present, my child. Let us both be a little cooler before we talk it over. My poor Vevette, if we had but stayed in Jersey! It was my self-willed determination to come hither which has brought all this upon you."

"No, maman, I think not so," I answered. "If Andrew hath such a temper—so jealous and distrustful—it is well to know it in time. But who would have guessed it in Normandy?"

"Who indeed! But there was nothing to bring it out. However, we will talk more another time."

The next morning Margaret and Rosamond appeared early. I dreaded meeting them; but they both kissed me cordially.

"We do not suspect you—neither Rosamond nor I," said Meg. "Now that my eyes are opened I can see a hundred things which might have roused my suspicions with regard to Betty, if I had not been blind as an owl. As to Rosamond, she never sees anything."

"But I did see something, and told you what it was, and you did not suspect more than I," returned Rosamond. "Don't you remember how confused and angry Betty was?"

"But how is it to end?" I asked.

"Oh, they are to be married. There is no other way, after the scandal that has been raised. Just think that they made Lucy Trehorn their go-between, and they have been meeting at her mother's cottage—the old witch!"

"And they are to be married!" said my mother. "Well, perhaps it is the only way, but it does not seem a well-omened beginning of married life. When is the wedding to be?"

"The week after next. My mother is already consulting with Deborah about the wedding-clothes and so on. She was saying this morning it was a pity you and Andrew should not be married at the same time, since she has linen enough ready for both of you."

"She can give it all to Betty," said I; "I shall not need it."

"Are you really in earnest?" said Rosamond.

"I am," I answered firmly. The girls both looked at maman.

"Yes, it is best so," said my mother. "I cannot give my child to one who could have her accused as Andrew did yesterday—nay, who could himself put her on the defence, as if she were the culprit, and never say a word in her behalf."

"I don't blame you, and yet I am sorry," said Meg. "I think Andrew greatly to blame, and I believe now he thinks so himself."

"His thoughts come rather late," said my mother. "If he thinks so, why does he not say so? But we will not discuss the matter. So Betty and Mr. Lovel are to be married. Where are they to live?"

"With his father for the present," answered Margaret. "The old man now lives quite alone in his great house at Allinstree, and I believe will be glad of anything which will keep his son at home. I do not know at all how he and Betty will agree, for he is a great Puritan."

"Oh, they will agree well enough so long as Betty has anything to gain," said I, and then recollecting myself, as I saw my mother look at me, "I crave your pardon, Meg. I should remember that she is your sister."

"She is no sister of mine," said Margaret. "I will never own her as such again. She has disgraced us all."

"She *is* your sister, and you cannot help it," said Rosamond, in that trenchant fashion of hers. "You cannot reverse the decrees of Heaven because you are displeased. Betty hath acted a base, treacherous part toward us all, and especially toward

Vevette, but still she is our sister, and as such we must needs treat her."

"Very true, Rosamond," said my mother. "Betty hath cruelly injured me and mine as well as you, her sisters, but we must try to forgive her."

Margaret was silent, but I saw in her face the hard expression I knew so well in Andrew's. I suppose my mother thought there was no use in argument, for after a moment's silence she began to talk of somewhat else, and then she proposed that we should have a music lesson to quiet our spirits. The girls agreed, and we got out our music and sang several hymns and songs, and practised some new chants and anthems which my mother had got in a parcel from London. For my Uncle Charles and Aunt Jem still continued their kindness toward us, though they were a little vexed that my mother should have refused their offer, and only a few days before we had received from them a great parcel containing books, music, tea and coffee and chocolate, and I know not what pretty trinkets and laces for me. Then, when we were in rather a better frame, my mother talked to us in her gentle, serious way of those consolations which were so dear to her own heart, and of that inward experience of the presence and the love of the dear Lord which was able to support and console under all trials. Rosamond drank in the discourse like water, but I could see that Meg was impatient under it. The truth was that her religion at that time was all outward—a matter of forms and ceremonies, of fasts and feasts.

She made a merit of always using the right collect on the right day, and never reading the Psalms but in their appointed order; but to the spiritual treasures concealed in those Psalms and collects her eyes were not at that time opened. This she has since told me herself.

That evening Andrew came down to our house and had a long audience with my mother. I did not see him, but maman told me the substance of the conversation. He wished to renew the engagement, and have things placed upon their former footing, but this my mother positively refused. Andrew begged to see me, and my mother came to tell me so, but I would not go down.

"I cannot see him now. Perhaps I may after a time, but at present it is impossible. Tell him that I agree to all you have said, but I cannot see him."

"I do not myself think it best," said my mother. "Let matters rest for the present." So Andrew went away and I did not see him.

Looking back at this time, I must say I think I behaved pretty well. I was as nearly broken-hearted as any poor girl ever was, but I strove against my sorrow, and tried in every way to keep myself occupied that I need not have time to brood. I had very bitter thoughts of Andrew, of his family, and even of Providence itself, but I did strive against them. I went to my school, and to Margaret's also twice in the week, for she could not quite manage the knitting, though she was improving. I read to poor Lois, and to an old blind sailor who lived in one of the cottages, and in every way strove to keep my thoughts occupied. My mother was all judicious kindness, knowing just when to help and when to let me alone; but with all my efforts and helps I passed many sad hours. I used to go constantly to church, and found comfort therein; but oh, how I wished for one of our old pastors, to whom I might open my heart! Mr. Dobson made a conscience of having daily prayers in the church, and of reading one sermon of a Sunday; but aside from that he gave no more heed to his parish than he did to—the moon, I was going to say; but indeed he took much more interest in the moon than he did in his next-door neighbors. He was wrapped up in his studies—chemistry, or rather alchemy, as I fancy, astronomy, and physics. He was looked upon with the greatest awe by the country people, as one who had powers over the unseen world, and I doubt not he himself fully believed in these powers.

Before the wedding we had another guest—none other than our cousin Lord Stantoun, from Stantoun Court, in Devonshire. We had the first news of his approach from a riding servant whom he sent on before him. My mother, of course, at once sent up word to the great house, and presently we were surprised by a visit from my aunt, who came down to hear further particulars, and to ask advice as to how she should receive the great man. She came in and greeted my mother and me just as if nothing had happened, for she was always one of those people who forget their own hard words as soon as they are spoken, and wonder that any one else should remember them.

"Well, and so my lord is really going to honor us with a visit," said she, when she had praised my work and admired the cosiness of the house. "'Tis an honor, no doubt, but one I would dispense with just now that I have so much on my hands."

"I believe my lord intends to lodge here," said my mother. "I gathered as much from his letter."

"Here!" said my aunt, staring, as was her way. "Why, how will you put him up or entertain him or his retinue?"

"As to putting him up, we have plenty of spare chambers, and, thanks to your kindness, abundance of linen and the like. As to entertainment, he will be content, I dare say, to fare as we do. As to his retinue, he has with him but two men-servants, who will lodge in the cottage."

"Well, I don't envy you your trouble," said my aunt. "I am sure you are welcome. Will he stay to the wedding, think you?"

"I dare say he will if he is asked," replied my mother. "He was always a well-natured gentleman."

"Now if you would only let Vevette be married at the same time, what a fine wedding we should have! She is young, to be sure, but—" and here she stopped, arrested by something in my mother's face.

"Have you already forgotten, sister Corbet, how you said before your whole family that it was an ill day when my daughter darkened your doors—how you declared that she would ruin your son as she had ruined your daughter?" asked my mother.

"But I was angry then," answered my aunt. "I did not mean half I said. Sure you won't break off with my poor son on that account. Why, he loves Vevette as the apple of his eye."

"He took a strange way to show it, I must needs say," returned my mother. "No, Amy, for the present any engagement between them is at an end. Should he wish to renew his suit when he returns he can do so, but meantime my daughter is quite at liberty."

My aunt remonstrated, and even cried, but my mother was firm, and when my aunt appealed to me I seconded her.

"Well, well, I suppose there is no use in saying more," said my aunt, wiping her eyes. "Let us hope all will yet turn out well. I only wish my Betty were half as docile as Vevette, though I can't think it was right; however, we will let by-gones be by-gones." And she began asking my mother's advice about certain details of the wedding—advice which she gave very readily, for she had no mind to keep up a quarrel.

"And you won't tell my lord of all poor Betty's misbehavior, will you?" said my aunt as she rose to go. "It would be such a disadvantage to her."

"Certainly not; why should I?" returned my mother. "I have no wish to injure Betty, and I am not given to spreading tales of scandal, whether true or false."

"I am sure that is true, and I only wish my tongue were as well governed as yours. And you won't mention the matter to my lord?"

My mother promised again, and my aunt went away content. I may as well say that my lord had not been an hour in our house before she had told him the whole story herself.

My lord came that evening and took up his abode with us. He was a fine, courtly gentleman, with something about him that reminded me of my father, though he was much older, and was indeed an old man. He greeted my mother in brotherly fashion, and kissed me on both cheeks, with a compliment to my good looks, such as old gentlemen give to young ladies as a matter of course. He expressed himself as delighted with the house and his accommodations, and we found him a most agreeable guest. He had come mostly upon business with my mother, concerning the estate I have mentioned. It seems this estate lay like a wedge between two farms of his own, and he wished to make some sort of exchange with my mother; but as he would not have her act in the dark he brought my mother and myself an invitation, warmly seconded by a most kind note from my lady, to make him a visit at Stantoun Court, which invitation my mother, after some consideration, accepted. She thought the change would be good for me, and

I believe also she wished to make friends for me in my lord's family. My lord also brought us some three hundred pounds in ready money, which was a very welcome supply.

Meg and Rosamond were in despair at our going away. My aunt alternately rejoiced in our good fortune and lamented my obstinacy in not accommodating matters with Andrew—an obstinacy which both she and Betty laid to the account of our increased riches, which had as much to do with it as the flight of the birds. Betty was quite herself again, demure and graceful, satisfied with herself and her lover. She fished hard for an invitation to Stantoun for herself and Mr. Lovel, but without success.

"No, I will not have them," was my lord's comment to my mother. "He is a fool, and she is, above all others, the kind of girl I hate—so sly and silky. The others are nice maids enough, but I will have none of Betty."

However, he made Betty a present, and was very agreeable at the wedding, which we all attended. I would have given a great deal to stay away, but my pride would not let me: so I went. All went off very well, only that Mr. Dobson, in his absent-mindedness, said in the ceremony, "That which God hath put asunder, let no man join together," which methought was an ill omen. But, indeed, it was but an ill-omened affair from first to last. Betty looked very handsome I must say, and so did her bridegroom. Rosamond was glum and Margaret ill at ease, while Andrew was cold, black, and stiff as one of the stone pillars out on the moor. My aunt, on the contrary, was as easy and as much pleased as if everything had come about in the best manner possible. But for her and for my lord, who exerted himself in the most amiable way, it would have been a sour wedding-party.

The next day Andrew again came to see my mother, and to beg a renewal of the engagement. He had talked with Mr. Lovel, now that they were upon more friendly terms, and Mr. Lovel had quite exculpated me from any knowledge of or part in his affairs and Betty's, saying with his easy laugh that he had only confirmed Betty's words because he would not see the lady he loved put down. Andrew was most earnest with my mother to overlook his past conduct, which he now confessed to be faulty, and to let him begin again.

"No, my fair son," said maman; "it would not be best. I can never forget what we owe you and yours; but my gratitude must be shown in some other way than by giving you my child under present circumstances. She is not to be thrown away and picked up again like a toy, to be cast down again the moment you see or fancy a flaw in her. You say this is your last voyage. When you return, if Vevette is still free and you choose to make your addresses to her, well and good, but for the present matters must remain as they are."

Then Andrew begged my lord's intercession, but my lord, when he heard the story, declared my mother was right, and that he would do the same in her place.

"What! would you see the lady you loved so accused, and never so much as take her part—never say a word for her? I vow and declare, I like Lovel's way the better of the two. No, no, wait, and learn the worth of a fine young lady."

Then Andrew watched and met me on my way home from the school, and pleaded his own cause. But maman had laid her commands upon me, and I was bound to obey them. I did not deny that I loved him, and he would have drawn from me a promise not to marry any one else.

"I cannot give such a promise," said I. "It would be the same as an engagement, which my mother has forbidden; but I am quite sure I shall never wish to wed any one."

"So you say now; but how will it be when you are among the gay gallants of Stantoun Court?" said Andrew. "Confess, now; has not the prospect of shining there some share in your decision?"

"Why, there it is again!" I returned. "You beg my pardon for one false suspicion, and the very next moment you begin on another. You cannot trust me, and how should I ever trust you? If we were to be married before you go away, you would always be wondering whether I were not somehow wronging you. No, no, Andrew. Let things be as they are at present. It is the best way, though it is hard."

And with that I fell to weeping, and he to try to comfort me alternately with accusing himself of all the meanness in the world, and with having thrown away his happiness and mine ; so that at the last I was fain to turn comforter myself. At last we agreed to abide by my mother's decision. We exchanged gifts : Andrew gave me his seal ring which he had had cut at Jerusalem with the Hebrew word Mispeh—

"For he said, 'The Lord watch between thee and me when we are absent one from the other,'" said he solemnly ; and surely the prayer was heard.

I gave him a little gold locket I had always worn, with the gold chain which sustained it, and he put it round his neck, saying it should never leave him. Indeed he wears it to this day.

For two or three days we were very busy arranging for our departure. My mother had insisted on giving full value for the house and land, which my lord approved as a good investment, and—what I think made Andrew feel more than ever what he had done—on paying for the horses and cows he had provided for us. Dinah was to go with us as waiting-woman. Jeanne and Simon were to live in the house, take care of it and the garden, and have all in readiness for our return. We looked forward at that time to living at the Well House for many years, my mother's health being to all appearance quite restored, and Aunt Amy very desirous of having us for neighbors. She did truly love both my mother and me in her way, and she had sense enough to value what my mother was doing for Meg and Rosamond.

All was done at last, and we bade farewell with all the kindness in the world. Betty was not there, having gone with her husband to Allinstree. We set out in pleasant weather, and arrived safely at our journey's end.

CHAPTER XV.

STANTOUN COURT.

STANTOUN COURT was and is a magnificent pile of building. The oldest part, a great grim tower, was built about the time of the Conqueror—or such, at least, is the family tradition—but the main building, and that which gives character to the whole, belongs to the early days of Elizabeth. The fact that the same material—a warmly tinted red stone—is used throughout gives a kind of unity to the whole. The gardens have always been very fine, being enriched, like ours at Tre Madoc, with all sorts of exotic trees and plants, brought home from foreign parts by those wandering Corbets. There is also an orangery and green-house, which at that time had been but lately erected, and was a special hobby of my lady's.

There was a good deal of company staying in the house, for my lord was fond of society, and made his two step-daughters an excuse for filling his house with young men. Martha, the elder, was already engaged, and was to be married before long. We were warmly welcomed by my lady, a kind and motherly woman, and by Theo, her second daughter. Mrs. Martha was just decently civil, and that was all. She looked at every one as if she were mentally taking their measure. I took a dislike to her from the first moment I ever saw her, and I have never seen occasion to change my mind.

We had a delightful apartment assigned to us—a large, airy room, with an adjacent sitting-room, all prettily fitted up, for my mother, and a turret-room near by for me. My lady made an excuse for giving me so small a lodging, saying that some of the bedrooms were being refitted in preparation for her daughter's marriage. "Pray make no excuses," said my mother. "I venture to say this is just the sort of room my daughter would choose."

"Yes, indeed," I added, as my lady turned to me; "I love a turret-room above all things."

"Then we are all suited," said my lady kindly; "but you are not looking quite well, sweetheart."

I assured her that I was well and only tired with my journey, and so with more kind words she left us to ourselves. We unpacked our mails and dressed ourselves, and then at the summons of a waiting-gentlewoman, we descended to the withdrawing-room, my mother having first recommended Dinah to the attention of this same gentlewoman, who said she would show her to the room of Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper.

"And is Mrs. Carey still living?" asked my mother. "She must be very old."

"She is so, madame," answered the waiting-damsel; "but she is still hale and active, and does all the work my lady will allow. This way, madame, if you please."

She conducted us to the open door of my lady's withdrawing-room, which was very splendidly fitted up—quite as fine as anything I had seen in London—and now filled with company. We were led into the room by my lord himself, who espied us in a moment, and placed in seats of honor. Indeed, both he and my lady seemed to think they could not show my mother too much respect. A great many people were presented to us, among them Mrs. Martha's servant Captain Bernard, a fine young gentleman, with a good, serious, kindly face. The young ladies presently made their appearance, to be chid by their mother for their delay, to which Mrs. Theo returned a smiling excuse, and Mrs. Martha none at all. There were several ladies and gentlemen present from the neighborhood, some of whom my mother had formerly known, and we were for a while quite the centre of attraction, a condition of things which did not seem to please Mrs. Martha at all, to judge by her black looks. She would hardly even give a civil answer to poor Captain Bernard when he addressed her, and as I looked at her I wondered what he could have seen in her to wish to make her his wife. But I found out long ago that there is no use in trying to account for such matters. Mrs. Theo was pleased with everything and everybody, herself included. She was uncommonly pretty, and dressed herself with great taste. She was not very deep, but what there was of her was good and sweet, and she was always kind, even to self-sacrifice when needful. She did not care for study, and had no special tastes for anything but embroidery, in which, indeed, she excelled any person I ever saw. We were soon the best of friends, and have always remained so.

The evening passed pleasantly enough, what with music and conversation, cards and tables for the elders, and a little dance among the young folks. I had never learned any dances except those of the peasant folks in Normandy, and at present I was in no spirits for any such amusement, but I exerted myself to sing and play, and though a good deal confused, I believe I acquitted myself fairly. When we returned to our room we found Mrs. Dinah well pleased with the manner in which she had been treated by Mrs. Carey, but full of righteous indignation at the light conduct of the gentlemen's gentlemen, one of whom, it seems, had actually offered to kiss her. My mother soothed and comforted her, and told her she had better sit in our room or else with Mrs. Carey, and then she would be out of the way of the men servants.

"Oh, they are not all alike, madame," answered Dinah quickly. "There is the steward, Mr. Matteson, who is as sober and well conducted a man as any one would wish to see."

"Well, well, I am glad there is one exception to the rule," said my mother. "Now we will have our reading and go quickly to rest, for I am very tired, and my head is quite in a whirl. It is long since I have spent so gay an evening."

For two or three days my mother was quite unwell, and I was of course with her most of the time, though I went out to walk two or three times with Mrs. Theo, who also showed me the house and pictures, which were very fine. As to Mrs. Martha, she never troubled herself about me in any way, and that was all I asked of her.

"You must not mind Martha," said Theo to me one day, when she had very shortly declined an invitation to walk with us. "She goes on her own way for all any one else, and she is always busy."

"What does she do?" I asked.

"Oh, she reads a great deal, especially in divinity, and she sews for the poor and visits them very often. She does twice as much for them as I do, and yet I don't know how it is, they are always glad to see mother and me, and they do not seem ever pleased to see her. I think sometimes they do not like so much advice. Do you not think that may be it?" she asked, raising her pretty eyebrows, and looking at me reflectively.

"Perhaps so," said I, with a smile, for I was much amused. "Then you do not give them advice?"

"I, Cousin Vevette?" with an air of great astonishment. "How could I do that? I do not know half as much as they do. Why, what advice could I give those poor women about their households and their children, when I never brought up a child or cooked a dinner in all my life ? I do sometimes just hint to them about washing a babe's face clean or mending its hose, but just in a pleasant talking kind of way, you know. And I must say they are usually ready to listen. But I never could go into their houses when they are at meals and remark upon their waste in eating fresh butter, or anything like that. Why, I should not like it myself, would you ?"

"Decidedly not !" I answered. "But I think it is pleasant to drop into cottages and talk with the women when they are at leisure, and play with the babes, don't you ?"

"Oh, yes, and to make christening frocks for them, and the like. Come, we will go and see the old folks at the almshouses."

We spent three or four weeks very pleasantly at Stantoun Court. My lord was fond of music, and took much pleasure in our singing and playing. My mother excused herself from returning visits, as her health was so delicate, but she was always in the parlor of an evening to help my lady in entertaining her guests. I soon came to enjoy these evenings very much, nor was I at all averse to the attentions I received from my lord's young visitors. I had one letter from Andrew, written from Plymouth before he sailed. He told me he had hoped to bid me farewell in person, but that had been made impossible. His ship was to go up to Chatham, and he would write from thence so soon as he knew his destination; but he believed that he should go to the West and not to the East Indies after all.

I shed many tears over this letter, which was as kind and tender as possible, and as my lord was sending post to London, I answered it with my mother's permission, and sent Andrew a watch-chain which I had learned to make from gold cord. Long afterward I heard that he had written again, but I never received the letter.

My mother concluded her business with my lord, greatly to the satisfaction, and I believe to the advantage of both parties, since the property she took in exchange was more immediately productive, and more convenient for a woman to hold. One morning after a long private conference with our host and hostess, my mother told me that she had made Lord Stanton my guardian in case of her dying before I was settled in life.

"Dear maman, do not speak of dying," said I. "You are looking so well."

"And I am well—better than I ever expected to be," she answered me; "but no one knows what may happen, and I shall not die the sooner for having settled my affairs. My lord and lady are good people, and will do well by you."

I was well content with the arrangement, for I liked both my lord and my lady. The latter was one of the most evenly good women I ever saw. She was not one who ever made great demonstrations of affection even to her own children, but she was almost always the same. As Dinah said, one always knew where to have her. My lord was somewhat choleric, and had a knack of exasperating himself over trifles which sometimes made one ashamed for him ; but still he was a fine, good-natured gentleman, who would have died before he would do a mean or cruel action, and his manners were perfect, specially to women. I never saw him speak even to a maid servant without lifting his hat. He was greatly annoyed by the freedom taken by some of his young gentlemen visitors with the village maids and the servants ; and when one of these fine sparks came to complain of a ducking in the sea which he got from one of the Lees "down to Cove" for making too free with his young wife, my lord said bluntly it served him right, and he would have done the same if he had been there. The youth blustered, and I believe would have challenged my lord, but thought better of it and took himself away.

But a great sorrow was hanging over my head, though I never suspected it. My mother's health had wonderfully improved of late, and there seemed no reason why she should not live out the usual term of years. She told me one evening that she had not felt so well in all respects since she was a young girl.

"It is not only in bodily health," said she, "but I am sensible of a great improvement in my spirits —not elation exactly, but a kind of joyfulness as if I were in certain expectation of good news, and I constantly dream of your father and of our old home in France which I have never done before."

I saw Mrs. Dinah shake her head and look grave upon this, but I knew she had her full share of Cornish superstitions. I myself thought the improvement in my mother's health and spirits arose from the change of air and scene, and from the enjoyment of cheerful company. I little thought what was that joyful news she was soon to hear—joyful to her, but sad beyond conception to me.

The very next morning, as I was finishing dressing, Dinah came to me, quite calm as usual, but pale as ashes.

"Will you come to your mother at once?" said she. "She is very ill."

I did not need a second summons. My mother lay in her bed, her eyes closed, breathing in soft sighs, and only at long intervals. My lady was already with her, applying salts to her nose and strong essences to her forehead, while old Mrs. Carey was rubbing the soles of her feet. They made way for me with looks of solemn compassion. Even then I was not alarmed.

"It is a fainting fit," said I. "She used to have them in France." I bent over and kissed her, calling upon her name. She opened her eyes with a look of unutterable tenderness, and her lips moved. Then she drew one more sigh and all was still.

"Come away, my dear child," said my lady, disengaging my hand from my mother's and taking it in her own. "Your dear mother is at rest."

Even then I could not believe it, and I would have them try again and again to revive her, but soon the deathly chill of the hand and brow and the white lips convinced even me, and I suffered my lady to lead me away.

They were all very kind. My lady took me to her dressing-room, and strove to win me to tears, for I was at first like one stunned. At last Theo's tearful caresses opened the flood-gates, and I wept myself into quietness. My lady left me to myself as much as was good for me, and no more. Mr. Penrose, the rector, came and prayed with me, and as I was able to bear it, he talked with me in a gentle and consoling way, which did me all the good in the world. He was a dry-looking, quiet elderly man, a native of Cornwall, and had remained in his parish through all the troubles and changes of the civil wars. My lord was greatly attached to him, though he thought him needlessly strict in some matters. He was a fine scholar, and the best preacher I had heard since I left France.

My mother was buried in the churchyard of the old priory church among our ancestors for many generations. It was a lovely place, all green and fair with grass and great trees, and luxuriant ivy mantling the old ruins. Oh, how I wept as I thought of my father's dishonored grave. How I wished they could have slept together! But it was an idle wish. What signifies what distance divides our worn-out bodies, if only our better part—our real selves—are resting together in the Paradise of God?

Of course word was sent to the friends at Tre Madoc, and I received a most kind letter from my aunt, asking me to make her house my home. The invitation was warmly seconded by the girls, but my lord and lady would have me stay with them for the present, and indeed it was my own desire. I did not feel that I could return to Tre Madoc where all was so changed, nor, knowing my aunt as I did, could I wish to reside in her family, specially as matters were so altered between Andrew and me. I wrote as kindly as I could, specially recommending to my aunt's care our old friends Jeanne and Simon. One good reason is as good as a hundred, and I gave no other for remaining where I was than the wish of my guardian.

I spent the autumn and winter quietly enough at Stantoun Court. At first, of course, I kept myself quite in retirement, but by degrees I began once more to mix with the rest of the family, and to take my share in what was going on. My aunt would have me take music lessons of a gentleman in Biddeford, who came to our house every week for that purpose, and at last took up his residence there altogether. He improved me very much in music, both singing and playing, and I also learned some arithmetic of him, especially such as relates to the keeping of accounts—a knowledge I have since found very useful.

There was a school at Stantoun Court, known as Lady Rosamond's school, which had been endowed by some former Lady Stantoun out of the revenues of the suppressed priory. This school had been closed for some time, and the house had fallen into disrepair, but Mr. Penrose was very desirous of having it opened again, and he had at last persuaded my lord to put the house in order and to settle a school-mistress once more. This last was more easily said than done, since no one could be found who came up to Mr. Penrose's ideas of what was desirable. At last I was the means of supplying the need, though at a considerable sacrifice to myself. My lady was one day admiring some work of Dinah's, and saying what a treasure she was.

"Oh, my lady, why would she not make a good mistress for the new school?" I exclaimed, struck with a sudden thought. My lady looked surprised, but by no means displeased.

"I believe that is a bright thought," said she. "But hath Dinah the needful knowledge?"

"She can read and write beautifully," said I, "and she hath some knowledge of figures. There is no sort of work she does not understand, and she is very apt to teach."

"But can you spare her?" asked my lady.

"I shall not like to spare her, that is the truth, my lady; but if it is for the good of the school, I will not be selfish," I replied. "I think the place is as well fitted for her as she is for it, and I believe it will please her well to have a home of her own."

"Well, I will mention the matter to my lord, and do you talk it over with Mr. Penrose, and we will see what is to be done," said my lady ; "I shall have to depend upon you a good deal in this business of the school, Vevette. You know I am no great walker. Theo has no turn for such work, and I know not how it is"—and she sighed—"Martha does manage so to set every one against her."

"I am sure I shall like the work," I said ; "suppose I go down directly and consult with Mr. and Mrs. Penrose?"

"Do so if you will, and ask them to come to supper to-night."

When Theo heard where I was going, she said she would walk with me. We had a pleasant ramble through the wood and down the Coombe to the village, and were most hospitably received by good Mrs. Penrose, and entertained with cakes and cream, Mr. Penrose was well pleased with the idea, and said he would himself talk with Dinah and find out her qualifications.

"I should like to be a parson's wife," said Theo, as we walked homeward.

"You Theo!" I exclaimed, in amazement. "You of all people."

"Yes, I of all people," she returned gayly.

"It seems to me such a useful, pleasant, quiet life."

"But I thought you did not like quiet," I said. "You always seem to enjoy company so much."

"Well, so I do ; and I like to dress prettily, just as I like everything to be pretty and neat ; but my head is not set on such matters—no, not so much as Martha's, though she is so demure. Perhaps not so much as yours is."

"You would make a good parson's wife in many ways, I am sure of that," said I. "You would make every one like you."

"I know I am not so very bright," said Theo; "I cannot sing and play like you, nor read great books like Martha, nor do any other grand things. But I like to help people enjoy themselves in their own way, and to comfort them in trouble if I can."

"I am sure you do," said I. "Janey Lee said the other day when her child died it was a comfort just to have you come in."

"Did she? I am very glad," said Theo. "But I don't know what I did, only to sit by her, and let her weep, and by and by draw her on to talk of the poor babe and its little pretty ways. I never can preach to people in trouble. It seems somehow unfeeling to talk to them of judgments and so on No, if I should marry a parson I should let him do all the preaching, you may be sure of that. I should content myself with making his house pleasant, and cooking up messes for the poor, and making baby things for the lying-in women. That is my idea of a happy life."

It seemed as if Theo's idea of a happy life was like enough to be fulfilled. She went on a little visit to her godmother, my lord's sister, an elderly lady who had a house near Exeter, where she maintained several young ladies of reduced circumstances but good family, giving them a suitable education, and a small dowry whenever they settled in life. Here she made the acquaintance of the Dean of Exeter, a man, of course, a good deal older than herself, but of fine presence and agreeable manners. He had always been a good deal of a stickler for the celibacy of the clergy; but it seems Theo found means to change his mind, for she had not been at home a week before he followed her, and asked her of her father in marriage. It was one of those happy matches to which there seems no objection on any side. The dean was rich and greatly respected. He had beside his deanery a cure in the same parish where my lady Jemina, my lord's sister, resided, and a beautiful rectory, where in Theo might concoct sick messes and make baby linen to her heart's content. She had a small property of her own, and my lord gave her a portion as to his own daughter. Mrs. Martha's wedding (which I should have mentioned in its proper place) was celebrated very quietly, as we were all in recent mourning for my mother; but my lord was determined that Theo should have a grand wedding. So she did, indeed, with all proper ceremony from the first going to church to the bedding of the bride. Matters of that sort have greatly changed since that time, and I cannot but think for the better, though I do hold that weddings should be celebrated publicly and joyfully, not huddled up as if they were something to be ashamed of. If matters go on as they have begun, I expect my granddaughters will jump into a carriage at the church door, and drive off to get as far as possible from all their friends. However, Theo's wedding was public enough. We had the house full of guests, and among them two whom I had no wish to see, and beheld with dread as birds of ill omen, and so indeed they were. These were no other than my cousin Betty and her husband. They had come to the neighborhood to visit a cousin of Mr. Lovel's, and my lady meeting them and learning who they were, thought she could do no less than invite them to the wedding. My lord did not look too well pleased when he heard of it, for he had taken a great dislike to Betty upon their first meeting, but he could not treat her otherwise than courteously in his own house. As to Mr. Lovel he never seemed to me to have any character, but to be a mere lay figure for the display of whatever mode in clothes or manners happened to be uppermost.

Betty had not been one evening in the house before she began exercising her powers. My lord was praising up the institution of marriage, of which he was a great promoter, and my lady, smiling, called him a match-maker.

"Well, I am a match-maker, I don't deny it," said he; "would you be ashamed of it if you were me, cousin Lovel?"

Betty had been sitting rather silent, and I suppose he meant to include her in the conversation. She answered at once,

"No, indeed, my lord. It is a good vocation. I am sure I have always thanked Vevette for betraying me to my brother, and so bringing my marriage to pass sooner than I could have done."

She spoke in those clear silver tones of hers, which always commanded attention, and several people turned to look at us. As may be guessed, I was covered with confusion, but I made shift to answer."

"You certainly owe me no thanks, Betty, for what I never did. I knew nothing of your affairs, and therefore could not betray them, had I been so inclined."

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said she, with her mocking, superior smile, and then presently to me in a kind of stage aside which every one about us could hear,

"What is the use of keeping up that stale pretence? I suppose you did what you thought right, and I don't blame you; but why deny what you and I know to be true?"

To this I made no answer whatever, and my lady presently called upon me to sing. I by and by saw Betty in close conference with Mrs. Bernard, and I had no doubt from the looks Martha cast at me that I was the subject of their conference.

The next day brought home my lord's son, whom I had not yet seen. He had been travelling abroad for some years, but meeting the news of his sister-in-law's approaching marriage in London, he had hurried home to be present on the occasion. He was a fine, grave, soldierly-looking young man, and very much like Andrew in the face, though taller and with much more of courtly grace in his manner. He was warmly welcomed by all, and especially by Mrs. Bernard. I never saw her soften so much toward any one, and, indeed, I believe he was the only person she ever really loved. He was very polite and kind to me, and I naturally liked him because he was so much like Andrew. He was musical, like all his family, and we sang together a good deal. One morning, as we were practising a song together, Betty peeped into the room. I believe she thought I did not see her, for she slipped out and presently returned with my lady, whom I have no doubt she brought on purpose. They stood listening a few minutes, and then Betty said half under her breath, and with a sigh,

"Ah, my poor brother, I see his cake is dough; but no doubt it is all for the best."

We stopped singing at this, and my lady asked me with some sharpness whether I had been at the school that morning. I told her no, and she at once thought of errands for me, both there and at the village, which would keep me busy all the morning.

"I will walk with you, cousin," said my young lord. "I want to go down to the Cove and see Will Atkins."

Certainly, my lady had not mended matters for herself or me. I got rid of my cousin as soon as I could, telling him that I should be a long time at the school-house, and after that had some poor people to visit. He was rather unwilling to leave me, but I insisted, and he had to yield.

Betty staid two days longer, and then went back to Allinstree, leaving mischief enough behind her. I do believe my lady meant to be just to me, but it was hard to resist the force of Betty's constant and artful insinuations, and she really came to think that I was angling for her step-son. It was not long, of course, before my lord took up the same idea, and what was worst of all, my young lord soon showed that he had no kind of objection to being angled for, and in fact was very ready and even anxious to be caught.

From this time my life at the castle was not at all comfortable. I missed the companionship of Theo, of whom I had grown very fond, though she never filled Rosamond's place to me. I missed my mother more and more. Besides, my conscience was not easy. My lord and lady were good people, as I have said ; but the times were times of great laxity. It was the fashion to profess great abhorrence of the Puritans and their ways, and immense devotion to the Church of England, and a good many people showed their devotion by deviating as far as possible from the ways of the precisians, as they were called. We professed to observe Sunday —that is, we all went to church in the morning, and my lady was very careful to see that all the servants were present at prayers ; but my lord yawned over a play or romance all the evening when he had no one to take a hand at cards or tables with, and when we had company staying in the house the Sunday evening was as gay as any other. My young lord had taken up the kind of infidel notions by which, as I said, some young men tried to appear intellectual at a cheap rate, and he had brought down some books of Mr. Hobbes with him which he would fain have had me read; but that I refused. I had been brought up to a strict observance of Sunday as a day of worship and of sacred rest, and at first I was shocked at what I saw. While my mother lived we usually spent our Sunday evenings together in her own room, but after her death, and especially after Dinah went away, I was easily drawn into whatever was going on below stairs, even to playing at tables with my lord, when he had no one else to amuse him. Then my old pleasure in dreams of wealth and consequence revived. I was something of an heiress, though my income was wholly dependent upon my lord's pleasure or discretion till I should be of age, and so I had plenty of attention. I began again to let the world come into my mind, and, of course, is soon gained a foothold there and ruled for the most part supreme. Now and then, especially when anything strongly reminded me of my mother, my better self—that self which loved Andrew—came uppermost, but at such times I suffered so much from the reproaches of conscience that I strove by every means to stifle its voice. I said to myself that my father and mother had been brought by the circumstances in which they were placed to take a gloomy view of religion and its requirements. That the strictness which they had inculcated was not needful at present, and that it tended (a favorite argument this with the devil) to make religion unamiable. That a man or woman might be a Christian and yet allow themselves many diversions which the stricter sort denied. In fine, my thought was, not how much I could do for my Lord, but how much of the world I could safely keep for myself. I was like a man who in time of war, instead of fleeing to the safe hills in the interior of the country, chooses to live as near the border as he can for the advantage of keeping up a trade with the enemy. Instead of simply shutting my ears to my cousin's infidel reasonings and declining the subject, I allowed myself to listen to him, and to be influenced by him to think that so long as a man lived a good life, forms and doctrines mattered very little, and I did not ask myself on what this good life was to be founded. In short, I grew more and more conformed to the world, which in the bottom of my heart I had always loved, and in proportion as I did so, the remembrance of my father and mother, and of their teachings faded from my mind. I still loved Andrew enough to reject with considerable vivacity a proposal made me by young Mr. Champernoun, a gentleman of the neighborhood, with a good fortune, and I must say a personable and pleasing man, though grave beyond his years. My lord and lady were very much vexed at my refusal, and used every argument to make me change my resolution, saying that Mr. Champernoun was a much better match than Andrew could ever be—which was true so far as fortune went—and that I should perhaps never have so good a chance to settle in life again.

"Well, well!" said my lord at last. "Wilful must have her way. An I had not promised your honored mother never to force your inclinations in any such matter, I should not use so much ceremony with you, mistress! You should be made to do what was best for you, whether you liked it or not."

He could not let the matter rest, but must needs take it up again when his son was present.

"Vevette is right," said my young lord. "Were I in her place I would not marry black Basil Champernoun either—a sour Puritan and precisian whose father was in the favor of Old Noll as long as he lived. I wonder, my lord, that you could think of such a thing."

"Aye, aye, you would fain find her a husband, I dare say; but mind, I will have none of that. If Vevette is flying at any such game she may as well come down at once."

"I am not flying at any game that I know of," said I, feeling my cheeks flame, as what lady's would not.

"Your face tells another tale," returned my lord. "Such blushes do not come for nothing."

"One may blush for others as well as for one's self," said I, rising from the tables where I had been playing with my lord, and in my confusion oversetting the board. And I betook myself to my own room, nor did I leave it all the next day, saying that I was ill at ease, which was the truth, and wished to be quiet. Lewis must needs make matters worse by coming to my door to inquire for me, and though I did not see him, but sent him a message by Lucy, my new little maid, his doing so did not help me with his father and mother.

When I came down-stairs again, I found my lord had gotten over his pet and was as gracious as before, but my lady was very cool to me. She loved Lewis as her own son, and was ambitious for him. The insinuations of Betty had not been without their effect, and Mrs. Bernard, who was settled in the neighborhood, threw all her influence on the same side. In short, I was very unhappy, and as I had about that time an opportunity of writing to my Aunt Jemima in London, I told her my troubles, and added that I knew not what to do. The result was an immediate invitation from her and my uncle to come to them in London, and make their house my home. My uncle also wrote a letter to my lord, which I did not see, but which I suppose satisfied him, for he made no objection to my going, and my lady decidedly forwarded it. Lewis had a great deal to say against it, but it may be guessed that his arguments had no great weight. It was settled that I was to travel with Theo and her husband, who were going up in a week or two, and my lady was directly in a great bustle to get me ready; now that there was a chance of getting me off her hands she was all kindness once more.

The evening before I was to go to join Theo at

Exeter, I sought out my lady in her dressing-room and asked to speak with her in private. I thanked her for her kindness to me, and assured her that I had had no desire to displease her in any way, and least of all by marrying Lewis. Then as she gave me a kind though somewhat embarrassed answer, I ventured to ask her what Betty had said about me. She would not tell me at first, but presently changed her purpose, and when I heard the cunning tale which Betty had imposed upon her I no longer wondered so much at her change toward me. It was not only in the matter of the meeting with Mr. Lovel, that she had misrepresented me, but she had told my lady that I had avowed to her a settled purpose to make myself the wife of some great man, and to that very end had persuaded my mother to break off the match with Andrew, at the very time that the change in my fortunes made it likely that I should go to Stantoun Court.

I explained the whole matter to my lady from beginning to end, and she was pleased to say that I had wholly exculpated myself, and to take shame to herself for being so ready to believe evil. She kissed me and said she was sorry I was going away, and bade me always think of Stantoun Court as my home. She had been very generous to me before, and she now gave me a gold watch and a beautiful set of pearl ornaments which she had bought in Exeter. I believe she talked my lord over that night, for the next day he told me he was sorry I was going away, and if I would even now give up the plan I should have a home at the court as long as I liked, and he would not tease me to marry any one. But the die was cast. The step was taken which was the beginning of a long journey—far longer indeed, than any of us thought, and I had no mind to turn back.

CHAPTER XVI.

LONDON.

THE next day I went to Exeter, from which place we were to set out for London in a few days. I found Theo living in a noble house, with everything pleasant about her, and enjoying herself to the full. She had no fancy for the journey to London, and would, I believe, much have preferred going to the country rectory, whither Mr. Dean usually retired in summer. We rode out to see the place, and truly I did not wonder at her love for it—all about it was so beautiful. There were no gentlemen's houses very near, but my Lady Jemima, my lord's sister, lived, as I have said, in an old mansion which had once been a convent of gray nuns. The house stood on a rising ground, and was beautifully embosomed in very ancient timber and a part of this same wood reached even to the walls of the rectory itself.

We visited the little village school, taught by a charming old dame, and where Theo distributed buns, gingerbread, and comfits with a lavish hand. Then we went into the house, where all was in order, and where the old housekeeper and her blooming neat maids welcomed us with evident pleasure at seeing their mistress. We also called upon my Lady Jemima, who was as great a contrast to my own Aunt Jem as could well be conceived. She was sitting at work among her family of maidens, who were all busy with their fingers, while one read aloud. There were six of them, all dressed alike in gray gowns and white caps with blue ribbons, and I must say they looked very bright and happy. Lady Jemima was a plain woman, with none of the family beauty of color, but she had a most sweet expression, at once benign and commanding. She sent away her young ladies to walk, and then sat down to talk with us.

"You have married off the last of your old family, have you not?" asked Theo.

"Yes, only a month ago, and the child hath done well, I think. Another has gone to be a governess in the family of a distant cousin of ours, a rich sugar refiner's wife in Bristol, and in one way or another they are all scattered and doing well for themselves. But my house is nearly full again."

"Not quite full, I hope, for I have a petition to make for a poor maid, the eldest child of Mr. Brown, the vicar of Torton," said Theo, and she proceeded to unfold the matter, saying that the curate was very poor, with a large family, and this daughter being lame, was not fit for service.

"Are they so very poor?" asked Lady Jemima.

"They are poorer than they need be if the wife were a better manager," replied the dean's lady; "but she hath been a waiting-gentlewoman to my Lady Saville, and still sets herself up on her gentility, forsooth, cannot possibly work with her hands, and talks of how she hath come down in the world. The aunt, who is a good plain farmer's wife, with a small army of children, tells me that this maid's lameness hath come, she verily believes, from working beyond her strength to make up her mother's deficiencies. She is her father's greatest comfort, poor man, but he will willingly spare her for the chance of having her recover her health."

"Will you send him to see me?" asked Lady Jemima. "I would talk the matter over with him myself, for no disparagement to you, Theo," she added with a smile, "you are one of those soft-hearted people who think everybody ought to have everything, and as my means are limited, I must make a discrimination, and not use them to encourage idleness or improvidence."

Theo smiled in her turn, and admitted that she was easily imposed upon. "But I am learning something, I assure you," said she. "I have found out that all the clean people are not saints and all the dirty ones reprobates, which was the notion I at first set out with."

After a little more talk we had dinner with Lady Jemima and the young ladies, and set out on our way home, calling at the house of the curate I have mentioned. Such a house—showing in every corner the results of sluttishness and improvidence.

The poor man, into whose study we were shown, sat in a ragged cassock, writing with one hand and holding a sleeping infant on the other arm, while his lame daughter was resting upon a rude couch or settle—a hard resting-place it looked—keeping two more little ones quiet by telling them a story, though her feverish cheeks and bright heavy-lidded eyes showed how much she needed rest. Another girl about twelve was clearing a table of the remains of what certainly looked like a very scanty meal. Theo at once took possession of the children, and distributed some cakes among them, which they devoured in a way that showed their dinner had still left them with an appetite. She had also brought new gowns for the elder girls, at sight of which the somewhat sullen face of the second girl brightened, and she looked really pretty. The father said just enough and not too much by way of thanks, and promised that he would go to see Lady Jemima next day. Just as we were about going madame sailed into the room, having evidently been busy attiring herself in the remains of her old waiting-gentlewoman's finery. She was loud in her thanks and praise of the gowns, and equally loud in her lamentations over the state of her own wardrobe, a hint of which Theo took no notice.

"I little thought I should live to receive charity," said the foolish woman; "but when one weds beneath one's station, there is no knowing what one will come to."

"As to that, I dare say your husband was so much in love as to think you capable of filling any station," returned Theo, wilfully misunderstanding her ; whereat she tossed her head, and looked ready to bite, but made no reply.

"I dare say she will make up the gowns for herself," said Theo, when we had taken leave. "It is a wonderful thing to see what sort of people little children are sent to, is it not?"

I agreed with her. I may as well say that the woman flatly refused at first to let Sally go to Lady Jemima, declaring that her lameness was more than half a pretence to get rid of work. But the father had his way for once, and poor Sally, if she did not recover, at least spent her last days in peace.

In a day or two we went up to London, in the dean's coach, with outriders, and spare saddle horses for one of us to ride now and then. It was a toilsome journey—worse by far than it is now, and that is saying a great deal. More than once the coach was fairly stuck, and we had to borrow oxen from the neighboring farmers to drag it out of the mire, and once we just missed an attack from highwaymen. They thought our party too strong, it seems, and let us pass, but a gentleman with whom we had spent the evening before at an inn, was stripped of all his own and his wife's valuables and received a severe wound in the arm. However, in spite of dangers and detentions we arrived safely in London at last, and I was left at my uncle's new house in Covent Garden, whither he had removed at the death of my Aunt Jem's father, who had left her quite a fortune.

My uncle and aunt were not at home, but I received every attention from my aunt's waiting-gentlewoman, and was installed in a pleasant room and treated to a cup of chocolate. I was glad to go to rest early, as I was very tired with the journey, and Mrs. Mercer said her lady would not be at home till quite late. It was long before I could fall asleep, there was such a noise in the street, but weariness overcame me at last. I slept soundly and awoke refreshed, though still somewhat stiff with the jolting I had endured. I had meant to begin the day with reading and devotion, but I was hurried and a good deal in awe of the new waiting-damsel my aunt had provided for me. I was afraid I should keep my aunt waiting breakfast, and so went down without any prayer whatever. Thus I began my new life with a false step.

I found my uncle much changed, and not for the better. He received me very kindly, as did my aunt, but he looked haggard, had grown older, and had a hard, worn expression, as if he lived under the stress of some habitual excitement. My aunt too looked older, and had lost a good deal of her beautiful bloom. They both welcomed me kindly, and my aunt began at once to talk of taking me out to the theatre and the park so soon as I should be provided with new clothes. My uncle said very little, and went out immediately after breakfast. I saw his wife take him aside and ask him some question, to which, judging from her face, she did not receive a favorable answer.

"But the child must have new clothes! I cannot take her out with me till she is fit to be seen," I heard her say.

"Well, well. I suppose Lord Stantoun has sent me some money by the dean. I shall wait upon him as soon as it is late enough. Meantime I can spare you this," putting some gold into her hands. "It is a part of my winnings last night."

"Ah, Charles, if you would but quit gaming," said my aunt, in a low tone, but not so low but that I heard her.

"How can I, child, when the king sets the example, unless I withdraw from court altogether, and I suppose you would not have me do that?"

"No, you cannot do that," replied my aunt, "but then—"

"Don't trouble thy head about the matter," interrupted my Uncle Charles. "If I lose one day, why I gain the next. So it is all even. You will be an old woman before your time, and have to take to painting, like my Lady Castlemaine—or to devotion, which I should like still less."

So saying he kissed her and went away, and she came back to me with a little line of vexation between her arched brows.

"Well, well! Men will be men. Come upstairs, child, and we will look over your wardrobe and see what you need."

I ventured to say that my Lady Stantoun had provided me with everything she thought needful.

"Yes, I dare say, according to her notions. But she has not been in London these seven years, and I dare say she has not changed the fashion of her dress since that time."

My new maid had unpacked all my things by this time, and my aunt, though she criticised unmercifully the fashion of my gowns and petticoats, yet allowed that Lady Stantoun had been very liberal.

"This may do well enough with a silk petticoat laid with silver," said she, laying aside what was meant for my best gown; "but you must have another and some lace whisks and a hat and riding coat, and Mercer must curl your hair."

"It curls of itself," said I, "but I have always worn a cap."

"Nonsense, child; what do you want of a cap? Come, I shall allow you no free will in this matter of dressing. You must needs confess that I am the best judge, and be ruled by me. You shall wear my t'other hat and mantle, and we will drive to the Royal Exchange and buy you some gloves and stockings and a fan and so on."

"But, Aunt Jem, I am in mourning," I ventured to say.

"Well, and so am I, child. Don't you see I am all in black?"

Certainly she was in black, but I should never have guessed she was in mourning, she wore so much lace and fine cut work. However, I promised to be guided by her judgment in all such matters, as indeed was no more than fitting, seeing I had come to be under her care. We presently went out in my uncle's coach, and were busy shopping all the morning. I thought I never could use all the things my aunt bought for me, and my head fairly whirled with the excitement of seeing so many new places and people. My aunt was in the very heart of the gayest society about the court, and many were the salutes she received from this and that great lady—even from my Lady Castlemaine herself and another very handsome woman whom she said was Mrs. Stewart, a great favorite of the king's. When we had finished our shopping, we went into the park, and here I saw the king and queen, the latter of whom I had never beheld before. I thought her very sad-looking, and remarked upon it to my aunt.

"Yes, poor thing, she is sad enough, and no wonder, since she is silly enough to love her husband," said my aunt.

"Do you think it silly for a woman to love her husband, aunt?" I asked.

"Yes, when he does not love her. But in truth, the queen is too grave and too devout to please a merry monarch like King Charles.

"Perhaps she finds comfort in devotion," I ventured to remark.

"Yes, I dare say. 'Tis the refuge of disappointed wives and faded widows. Perhaps I may take to it some day—who knows?"

I thought within myself that my mother always found comfort in devotion, though she was by no means faded, and that devotion when it was taken up in that way as a last resort, was not like to afford any great solace ; but I did not venture to speak my thoughts. I had already learned to be ashamed of being thought devout.

"And who is that young lady in attendance upon the queen ?" I asked.

"That ! Oh, that is Mrs. Godolphin," was my aunt's reply, with a curious change of tone. "*She* is a true saint, if you please. I do not believe the smile or frown of any or all the kings in Europe would make her turn a hair's breadth to the right hand or the left, in any matter of duty or religion. We used to be great friends when we were young chits together at school," and she sighed.

"And are you not friends now ?" I asked.

"We have never quarrelled, child, if that is what you mean, but she has gone her way, and I mine. There, we won't talk of it. See there is the coach of the French ambassador. Is it not fine ? He has some fine lady and gentleman visiting him from France. I dare say we shall meet them to-morrow night. But we must be going home to dinner."

My uncle was not at dinner, being in attendance upon the Duke of York in some capacity or other. I forget what. When the meal was over my aunt said she meant to take a rest, and she dared to say I would like to do the same. I took the hint and retired to my own room. Here was a chance for the devotions I had neglected in the morning, but it may be guessed that I was in no promising frame for them. However, I read a chapter and hurried over a few forms, and then spent the rest of the afternoon reading a French romance I had found on my table, and in practising upon the harpsicon my uncle had sent home for me. He was very fond of music, and wished me above all things to cultivate it and to improve my voice. In the evening my aunt entertained a small company of her friends, and she would have me sing for them. I received many compliments, both upon my voice and my playing, with which my aunt was honestly pleased, for she was never one to envy another's success. When I went up to my room I found Mercer waiting to undress me and curl my hair. She had also a new gown and petticoat ready for me to try on, and I actually forgot all about my prayers till I was in bed and the light out. So ended my first day in London.

Next morning I received a message to come to my aunt's bedroom as soon as I was dressed.

"Is my aunt ill?" I asked of Mercer, who was waiting to show me the way.

"Oh, no, Mrs. d'Antin. She wishes to introduce you to your teacher of music."

I actually did not know where to look when I entered my aunt's room and found her lying in bed half raised upon a heap of laced pillows, with only a light mantle thrown over her night dress, while a very smart gentleman stood talking by the bedside. It was the first time I had seen such a reception, but I soon grew accustomed to it, as one does to everything.

My aunt introduced me to Mr. Goodgroome, who tried my voice, and pronounced it a good one and well managed, though lacking in finish and execution ; and as this was all the fault he could find I suppose I must have acquitted myself pretty well, since I have observed that it is very hard for any one of his profession to allow merit in the pupils of another.

"You must learn Italian as fast as you can, so as to learn the Italian manner of singing," said my aunt, at which Mr. Goodgroome frowned but did not speak.

"I know something of the language already," said I. "My mother and father both spoke it."

"Why, you are quite an accomplished young lady," said my aunt playfully. "Can you draw at all?"

"Yes, aunt, a little."

"You must have lessons of Browne by and by, but not at present, I think. I don't wish you to spend too much time at lessons. What hours can you give her, Mr. Goodgroome?"

Mr. Goodgroome pulled out his table-book, and after some consideration decided that he could give me from eight to nine on Tuesdays and Fridays.

"Why, that is rather early," said my aunt.

"I cannot make it later," replied the professor, with an air of importance. "I must go to my Lady Sandwich's young daughters at nine, and to Whitehall at eleven. But I can take from five to six in the afternoon if it will suit better."

"Nay, that is worse than the other," replied my aunt; so it was settled that I should begin my lessons at eight on Tuesday morning. I inwardly determined that I would spend as much as possible of the intervening time in diligently practising my fingering scales and trillos, so as not to discredit my mother's teaching.

I soon found, however, that I should have little time to practise. My Aunt Jem was one of those people who find quiet the most intolerable of all things. When she was not out herself, she would have company at home, and when she had no one else to amuse her, I must devote myself to that purpose. Not that she was either selfish or unkind. She had the making of a noble woman in her, had poor Aunt Jem, and even the world for which she lived had not quite spoiled her. But reflection was not agreeable to her, and diversion was her very life. Our usual course of life was this: When my uncle was at home we breakfasted in my aunt's dressing-room; when he was not, in her bedroom, which she seldom quitted till ten or eleven o'clock, and where she would give audience to such tradespeople as it was convenient for her to see. Dressing was a work of time, thought, and much care, for, as my aunt herself observed, she was growing older, and as natural beauty waned one must supply its place by art. The position of a patch was a subject of five minutes' consideration, and the rising of a pimple a cause for grave alarm. When the important business was at last concluded, we usually went out shopping. In one of these excursions we met my old acquaintance Mr. Pepys, a meeting which resulted in his being invited with his wife to dine in Covent Garden.

"He is a rising man and in a good deal of estimation at court," said my aunt, when we parted, "and his wife is a genteel, harmless little body. Besides, he was kind to your mother, and one must not forget old friends."

I was much pleased, both at the attention shown to the good man for my sake, and also because I hoped I might hear news of Andrew, to whom my better self still clung. But Mr. Pepys could tell me little more than I knew already—that the ship had gone to the West Indies, and would probably also visit New England before her return, which would occur in about six months. My Uncle Charles was at home and we had a very pleasant party. I sung for Mr. Pepys and with him, for he was a good deal of a musician, and my aunt took his opinion as to her choice of a teacher which he commended.

In the afternoon we usually went into the park, paid visits, or attended some show or exposition of china or pictures, or we went to some auction or other. In the evening we either went out or entertained company at home, in which case we had cards, and not unfrequently the play ran pretty high. The dean and Theo came to one of these entertainments, which indeed was made expressly for them; but I think they were not very well pleased with what they saw, for Theo sent for me the next day and was earnest for me to return home with her to Exeter.

I told her with many thanks that I could not think of it—that my aunt needed me, and that I was happy with her.

"That is the worst of it," said Theo gravely "You like the life, and that makes it the more dangerous for you."

"But you used to like it yourself," said I.

"Not such company as we see here," she answered, and then after a little she added in a low voice, "Vevette, what would your mother advise if she were here? What would she say?"

I was vexed at being reminded of what was one of my chief drawbacks in my present life, and answered pettishly, that my mother's former life and circumstances had naturally made her rather strict and melancholy in her notions, and that I could not think any one was a better Christian for always wearing a solemn face and denying one's self every pleasure. Theo looked very grave, but she said no more, nor did she again ask me to return with her.

About a fortnight after I came to London I went with my aunt to a grand entertainment at the house of the French ambassador. I had an entirely new dress for the occasion, and wore my pearl necklace which my lady had given me. My aunt was very solicitous that I should look my best, but when she saw me, she professed herself quite satisfied, and presented me to my uncle with no little pride. We found the street filled with carriages, and the usual crush and confusion prevailing—horses backing and rearing, coachmen swearing and wheels interlocking—but we reached the door at last, and made our way through the ranks of splendidly dressed ladies and gentlemen to the saloon where the ambassador received his guests. He was a very courtly man, with a smile and a compliment for all, and one of the handsomest and most crafty faces I ever saw.

"And this is my young countrywoman of whom I have heard," said he, addressing himself to me. "I must by and by present her to a friend. I am proud of my countrywoman, madame. Indeed, she would be a credit to any nation on earth."

"There, Vevette, your fame is established as a beauty," whispered my aunt, as the crowd pushed us on, "since monsieur the count hath pronounced such an eulogium upon it. Is not this a splendid scene?"

It was indeed, and my eyes wandered from one gay group to another, till they were suddenly arrested by a sight which for a moment almost made my blood stand still. Was it my father himself, or was it his ghost—that handsome gentleman in the blazing French uniform who stood regarding me with such an eager gaze? Could it be that he had not been killed after all? My eyes grew dim for a moment, and when I looked again the gentleman had disappeared.

"What ails you, Yvette?" said my aunt, in alarm; "you are as white as your dress! Gentlemen, make way for us, I beg, my niece is not well."

Way was made to a window, and I was placed on a seat while one gentleman brought water and another wine, and ladies proffered essence bottles, and vinaigrettes. I recovered myself with a great effort, for I was quite ashamed of the commotion I had made. However, my aunt would not have me move at once, but took a seat near me, and we were soon surrounded by a circle of gallants. Into this circle presently came my Uncle Charles leading the very gentleman whose resemblance to my father had upset me. It was not so close, now that I saw him near, though it was still very striking. I saw that he was older than my father, and instantly guessed who he was before my Uncle Charles presented him. It was my father's oldest brother, the Marquis de Fayrolles.

"And this is my niece," said he, in a tone of great affection, as he bent over me and took my hand. "My dear Geneviève, I am more delighted than I can express at this meeting. I supposed from what I heard that you and your poor mother had perished in your attempt to escape from the sack of the Tour d'Antin. I came down the next day but one, too late to save the life of my unfortunate brother, but not too late, I am glad to tell you, to do justice to his murderers."

Then my uncle *had* come to our rescue after all. This was the conclusion I jumped to. I made my return to his salutation, and inquired after Madame La Marquise.

"She is not at all well, I regret to say," was the reply. "I begin to fear the climate of England does not agree with her. I hope to make you acquainted with her another day. This is not the place for family affairs, so I trust you, madame," bowing profoundly to Aunt Jem, "will allow our kinswoman to visit my wife to-morrow."

My aunt at once assented, and the marquis chatted on easily in French about the court, the parks, and all those little nothings which make up talk in such places. He led my aunt and myself to the supper table, and placed himself between us, paying us every attention. It was impossible to withstand his manner, which had all my father's heartiness with the grace which can only be acquired by habitual converse with the best society. My aunt was the envy of all her fine acquaintance for being so distinguished, and when she returned home she pulled a fine diamond ring from her finger and bestowed it upon me, saying I deserved a reward for the way I had comported myself in this, my first real appearance in the great world.

"You have had a real success, and there is not one girl in ten of your age who would have borne it so well," said she; "but what upset you so? Was it the heat, or are your stays uneasy? You must not let Mercer dress you too tight. It will make your skin look muddy and your nose red.''

"It was not that,'' said I, laughing a little nervously, for I was very tired. "I saw the marquis in the crowd, and thought it was my father.''

"There, there, child, don't give way,'' said my aunt, alarmed as I began to sob. "You are quite overwrought. Put her to bed, Mercer, and give her some sal-volatile and lavender.''

Mercer obeyed, and would have stayed by me till I fell asleep, but this I would not allow. I wanted to be alone. I cried awhile, but the composing draught at last took effect, and I fell asleep to dream about ambassadors, balls, and my new-found uncle, who was strangely and uncomfortably mixed up with my father, and who was now burying me alive in the vault under the old chapel, while Andrew held the light, and now asking Betty about me, who was telling him all sorts of monstrous fictions.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY NEW FRIENDS.

I AWOKE in the morning tired enough; but dressing and a cup of coffee refreshed me, and by the time my uncle's carriage and servants came for me I was quite ready to attend him. The Vevette of a year ago would perhaps have breathed a prayer for guidance under such difficult circumstances, but I never even thought of it. I was carried to the ambassador's residence, and led through more than one grand apartment to the room where my new uncle and aunt were awaiting me.

My aunt, Madame de Fayrolles, was a woman of forty or thereabout, elegantly dressed and rouged in a way that made me open my eyes at first. Rouge was not then commonly worn in England—scarcely at all, in truth, save by such kind of madams as Lady Castlemaine—but in France it was a regular part of the toilette of a lady of quality, and was worn without any disguise. She received me kindly, kissing me on both cheeks, and then presenting me to a gentleman in a semi-clerical dress, whom she called Father Martien. I felt some of my old childish terror of a priest revive, as the gentleman bowed to me, but of course I returned his salute politely. After a few words he quitted the room, saying that he hoped to meet me again and know me better.

"That is a distinguished man," said madame, as he closed the door behind him. "He is the ambassador's confessor, and very high in his order. Men say he is as like to be general."

"General of what?" I asked. My aunt stared.

"Of the Jesuits, of course—what else? But I forget, you know nothing of these matters. My poor brother-in-law! Ah, what a pity he was so obstinate! But we will not talk of that now," catching a warning glance from her husband. "Tell me, petite, how old art thou?"

I told her.

"And they have not yet settled thee in life? Ah well, so much the better. And now what shall we do to amuse you?"

I could not help thinking my aunt very charming, in spite of the rouge which had so shocked me at first. She had all the brightness and sparkle, all the grace of manner of a genuine French woman, and when she desired to please she was certainly irresistible. She set to work at once to reform my dress, and the manner of wearing my hair, exchanging with her waiting-damsel many comments upon my good looks. Then she would turn out all her jewels for my amusement, and bestowed several elegant trifles upon me, besides a box of beautiful perfumed gloves.

"I will divide these with Aunt Jemima," said I; "she has beautiful hands."

"Nay, keep them for yourself, I have a little cadeau for the good aunt—what did you call her?"

"Jemima," I replied.

"Ah, what a horror of a name! But no matter, so she is kind to thee." And my aunt began, while displaying all her fans and other trinkets, to question me about my own affairs. My uncle, who came in, soon joined in the conversation, and by easy degrees, and almost without knowing it, they won from me my whole family history, from beginning to end. Then my uncle in his turn, began to explain matters, as he said. I cannot, at this distance of time, recall what he said exactly, but he made it clearly appear that his conversion to the Romish Church was a matter of deep conviction, and an act of quite disinterested faith, which had brought upon him most unmerited obloquy and persecution. He told me he had been on his way to the Tour d'Antin to visit my father, when he had been met by the news of the demolition of the chateau.

"I hurried down at once," said he. "I had hoped to induce my dear brother, if not to conform, which indeed, knowing his disposition, I hardly dared to expect, at least to withdraw quietly and in safety either to Jersey or Geneva, from which places he could easily be recalled had it been desirable.

Judge, my dear Genevieve, of my feelings when I found my brother dead, his house a mass of ruins, and his wife and child fled no one knew whither. It was believed that you had put to sea under the guidance of the young English gentleman, and that you had all perished together. A fisherman, who had been driven over to Jersey by the storm, reported seeing a boat bottom upward and some floating articles of female apparel which confirmed me in the idea, and I mourned you as dead till I met you last night. I was at once struck with your resemblance to our family, and on inquiry found that you were indeed my niece."

I need not repeat all that was said to me that day. Suffice it to say that I returned home at night completely bewitched by these new relatives. I found Aunt Jem a little out of humor at my staying away so long, but she was easily pacified by my excuses, and delighted by the boxes of gloves and of French comfits I had brought her from my Aunt Zenobie. French gloves were then, as they are now, very much better than any made in England.

This was the first of many succeeding visits, in the course of which Monsieur and Madame de Fayrolles gained more and more of my confidence and regard. They were very attentive to Aunt Jem also, but she did not like them as well as I did. I well remember a remark of hers with which her husband was not at all pleased.

" They are fishing for you, Vevette. They mean to make a convert of you, and then what will the sailor say?"

"Nonsense, Jem," said my Uncle Charles sharply. "What interest have they in the matter? Why should you wish to set Vevette against her father's family?"

"I do not wish it," returned Aunt Jem, looking at once hurt and surprised, for Uncle Charles, though often moody, was seldom anything but kind to his wife, of whom he was both fond and proud. "I am sure it is but natural they should wish to bring the child to their own way of thinking. I am not sure but I should like to be of that way myself," she added, sighing a little. "It is a comfortable kind of faith after all. One puts one's self into the hands of a priest, and then one is sure of salvation."

I might have answered that this salvation was a thing that a devout Roman Catholic never could be sure of, since his salvation depends not alone upon the all-perfect Saviour, but upon the offices of a man like himself who may be altogether a sacrilegious person; but I had become very shy of speaking upon religious subjects. I still, it is true, kept up a form of devotion morning and evening, but with my conscience constantly burdened by unrepented sins which I would not even confess to be sins, my prayers could be only the emptiest of forms. My Bible lay unread day after day, and though I did indeed go to church once every Sunday, I did not greatly profit by that. · It was a time of great deadness in spiritual matters in the Church of England, though there were a few faithful preachers who shone as lights in a dark place. But our parish clergyman was not one of them. Sometimes he gave us a disquisition on the heresies of the first ages in the church, but his sermons in general were either upon the divine right of kings and the wickedness of those who ventured in anything to oppose them, or else dry lectures upon morals to the effect that vice was bad and virtue was good. I heard about the Theban legionaries till I wished they had been massacred long before they were, so that they might have been lost in the mists of antiquity. As to the moral lectures which formed a great part of the preaching of the day, they were not like to have any great influence so long as people saw the king, an open and shameless contemner of the laws of God and man, publicly receiving the sacrament, while his attendants meantime laughed and chatted among themselves as if they had been in a playhouse, the Duke of York himself setting the example. As I said, there were glorious exceptions —men who shunned not fearlessly to declare the whole council of God, and to rebuke sin wherever they found it, but these were not the rule, and they did not come in my way. Sunday was a long day to us at my aunt's, though we did our best to shorten it by reading romance and plays, playing at tables, and seeing company at home.

My visit to Madame de Fayrolles was soon repeated, and it came to be an understood thing that

I should spend at least two days in the week with her. I made the acquaintance of Father Martien, as he was called, and found him a very polished, agreeable gentleman. He was a Frenchman by birth, but educated in Florence. We soon fell upon the subject of Italian literature, and he ventured gently to criticise my pronunciation, and offered his services to correct it by reading with me two or three times a week. I had always been fond of the language, and accepted the offer with enthusiasm. I hardly know how we began upon the subject of religion, but we were in the midst of it before I was aware. I had been well furnished, like every Huguenot child, with abundance of answers to every argument that could be brought forward upon the Romish side ; but, alas, the armor was loose and dented from neglect, and the sword rusty and out of use. My faith in Christianity itself had been in some degree shaken by the sneers and arguments I had heard from Lewis, and also from my Uncle Charles, who was a worshipper of Mr. Hobbes. I had come to think that one form of faith was perhaps as good as another—that so long as men led good lives, their opinions did not very much matter, and so forth. When I tried to recall my old arguments I remembered other things which roused my conscience, and made me wretched, that I was glad to let them rest again. I was persuaded to hear mass in the chapel of the French ambassador, that I might enjoy the music. Aunt Jem herself went to the chapel of the queen for the same reason, and I soon discovered that she was leaning the same way as myself.

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." One might think so certainly, and yet how often do we see nets spread in plain daylight, and the silly birds walking straight into them. Every day I grew more and more indifferent to the faith in which I had been educated, and for which my father had died. Every day I saw new reason to regret the bigotry—so I learned to call it—which had brought so many misfortunes upon our family. Every day I grew more attached to my uncle and aunt, and came more under their influence. My Aunt Jem even grew a little jealous, and murmured that it was rather hard she should have so little of my company, when she had been the means of my coming to town in the first place; but a little attention from the ambassador's family, and a few introductions to great people, and cards to great entertainments, soon reconciled her to the state of things. As to my Uncle Charles, I am sorry to write it, but I have good reason to believe that he was playing into the hands of Monsieur de Fayrolles all the time. He was deep in debt, and embarrassments of all sorts, caused by his high play and extravagant style of living, and I believe that he deliberately turned me over to my French relations in consideration of being relieved of some of the most pressing of these liabilities.

One thing held me back from taking the last step to which I was now being gently urged and persuaded—and that one thing was my love for Andrew. I still wore his ring, and still watched vainly and with the sickness of hope deferred for news of him. The news came at last.

I was breakfasting in my aunt's bedroom as usual, for Aunt Jem grew more and more indolent in her habits and often did not rise till noon. Her health was failing even then, and she had very bad nights, but she would never confess that she was ill. She had, however, so far yielded to pain and weakness as to remain at home for a day or two. I was breakfasting with her, as I said, and trying to entertain her with accounts of what I had seen and heard when out with Madame de Fayrolles the day before, when my uncle entered the room. He saluted my aunt with his usual kindness, and then asked me for a cup of coffee.

"And what is the news at court?" said my aunt.

"Nothing very special, that I know of. One of our ships from the West Indies has come in, and by the way, Vevette, I heard of an old friend of yours—"

My heart beat fast, and my hand trembled so that I was fain to set down my cup of chocolate.

"Your old friend and flame, our good cousin, has done a very wise thing," he continued, playing the while with my aunt's little dog. "He has married the daughter of a rich planter with I know not how many thousand slaves and acres, and means to settle in those parts so soon as he can arrange his affairs. What say you, chick? Shall I bespeak a willow garland for you?"

"I have no occasion for it, thank you," I answered, with a calmness which surprised myself. That affair was broken off by my mother long ago."

"Of course," said my aunt; "Vevette has too much sense to regret that her cousin should look out for himself. I hope to see her make a much better marriage than that. She has improved wonderfully of late, and would grace any station."

"But are you quite sure this news is true?" I asked quietly. "It will be a great grief to Andrew's mother and sisters if he should settle abroad."

"I dare say they will reconcile themselves, seeing how much he gains by it," replied my uncle carelessly. "Besides, he may not remain abroad always. I dare say in time he will return to England, rebuild the old tumble-down court at Tre Madoc, and found a great estate. Report says the young lady is beautiful as well as rich, and that it was quite a love match. They believe in such things out there it seems."

"You believed in them once," said my aunt.

"Yes, in old days when you were young, my love; but there are no such things now, because there are no more such women."

My poor aunt brightened at this speech and the caress which accompanied it. All of her that was not spoiled by the world clung to her husband.

Sorrow in itself has no power for good, but only for evil. It is only while we look not at the things that are seen, but at those which are unseen, that it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The things unseen had become to me more unreal than any dream, and consequently this great blow only hardened and embittered instead of softening my heart. I said to myself that there was no truth or trust in anything—that Andrew was no better than the rest. I cast myself loose from all the considerations which had hitherto restrained me, and gave myself wholly over to the influence of Monsieur and Madame de Fayrolles, and especially of Father Martien. Aunt Zenobie, with that consummate tact which distinguished her, and which I have sometimes even thought served her instead of a soul, never alluded to the subject of Andrew's marriage, and never showed that she had even heard of it, except by redoubling the amount of petting and caresses she bestowed on me. Father Martien, on the other hand, hinted delicately at similar sorrows he had himself undergone in early life, and spoke of the consolations the church had to offer to wounded hearts, of the tender sympathy of the mother of God, and the comfort of having a woman like myself to whom I might confide all my sorrows, and who could understand my heart. I might have said that he who made the woman's heart was at least as likely to understand it as any one else, and that women were not, as a general thing, more tender to women than the other sex. But the truth was I was eager to be—I will not say convinced, but persuaded. My soul was a fountain of bitter waters—a spring of boiling rebellion against Heaven, and anger against man. I only wished to divide myself as far as possible from Andrew and to go where I never need hear his name. I allowed myself to go constantly to mass with my aunt, to listen to Father Martien's arguments with complacency, and to give good hopes to my French friends that I meant to return to the bosom of the true church.

Another event occurred about this time, which had the effect of throwing me still more completely into the hands of Madame de Fayrolles. My Aunt Jemima died. As I have before hinted, she had long been ailing, though she had striven against her malady, and concealed its ravages with all the force of her will. But no human will is of any avail when death knocks at the door. The day came when she was obliged to keep her bed and acknowledge herself ill, and from that time her decay was very rapid. It was most pitiable to see how she clung to that world which was slipping away from her—to the miserable crumbling idols which she had worshipped, but in which there was no help. She would be partly dressed every day, would see those—they were not many—who called upon her—would hear all the news of the court and the town. Her gentlewoman Mercer, who was something of a religious person in her way, wished her to have a clergyman come to read prayers, but Aunt

Jem refused. She was not as bad as that, she said; there was plenty of time; she was not going to die. She would be better when spring came—in truth, she was much better already. Alas, poor lady, her death-warrant was signed and the messenger was at the door. Her end came very suddenly at last. There was barely time to send for a clergyman, and when he came, her speech was gone, though she had her senses and her eyes wandered from one face to another in agonized appeal for the help which no mortal could give. Mercer in her hurry had brought not our parish clergyman, but her own, a serious and I believe truly religious young man, who tried to direct my aunt's thoughts and hopes to the only sure foundation, but she hardly attended, and we could not be sure even that she understood. Surely there is no sight of martyrdom for the truth's sake so terrible, so pitiable, as the death-bed of one who, having given his whole heart and mind to the world, is called upon to leave it forever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GREAT STEP.

MY Aunt Jem's death was, of course, a great shock to me, and might well have opened my eyes as to the course wherein I was walking, but I would not have them opened. In the state of mind I was at that time, it seemed to me only a new injury. I was like one possessed. In the midst of all my worldliness and backsliding my heart had clung to Andrew, and I had believed in his faithfulness and uprightness. Now he turned out no better than the rest. There was no truth in anything. My father and mother had served the Lord faithfully, and how had they been rewarded? If they had indeed served him aright, would he not have stretched forth his hand to help and deliver them? Thus I reasoned, contemning the generation of his children, and wilfully shutting my eyes to the fact that the Lord nowhere in the New Testament promises exemption from sorrow and the cross in this world as a reward for faithful service. There is no person so open to the attacks of Satan as a professed and enlightened Christian who is living in known and wilful sin.

The first effect of my aunt's death was to throw me more completely into the hands of Madame de Fayrolles. I was very unwell after the funeral, and indeed kept my bed for several days. As soon as I was able to be up, madame came to me full of affection and of caresses. She informed me that she and her husband were going to travel to Bath and to several other watering-places, and that she had arranged to take me with her. My health and spirits would be all the better for the change, and my uncle had given his consent.

"So you have nothing to do but to get ready, and we will set out in a few days," she concluded. "Have you an attendant, or shall I provide one?"

Now Mercer had waited upon me since my aunt's death, my own damsel having gone to a more lucrative place. She had tended me with the most devoted kindness, and I had become greatly attached to her; but when I asked her whether she would accompany me on my journey, to my surprise and chagrin she flatly refused.

"But why?" I asked.

"Well, Mrs. d'Antin, the truth is this," said Mercer: "I am fond of travelling, it is true, and I like you. You have alawys been a good young lady to me. But—I mean no disrespect—I do not like that French lady, and I like her attendants still less. Besides—"

"Well, besides what?" I asked a little impatiently; "*besides* is always the real reason, I find."

"Besides, madame, I should not think it right," added Mercer, turning very red, though she spoke with great resolution. "I have lived too much for the follies of this world as it is. I know I have a liking for them, and am therefore best out of their way. Some words your blessed mother said to me when she was here, and I was waiting upon her, stuck in my mind and first made me think of something beyond this life, and my poor dear lady's death has been another warning to me about living for this world. My sister has a ladies' boarding-school at Hackney, in which I can invest my savings, and I can be a help to her in teaching the ladies to work and in looking after their dress and manners. She will be very glad to have me with her, and I hope I shall be able to do some good in the world before I leave it."

"Oh, very well," I said petulantly, "if you prefer teaching cross and satin stitch to stupid girls, and seeing that they comb their hair and put on clean linen, to attending upon and travelling with me—"

"I do not *prefer* it, madam," answered Mercer. "I choose it because I know that I shall be putting myself out of the way of temptation, and into the way of doing good. Besides, madame, I am a simple unlearned woman who does not know how to answer for her faith, and to say the truth I would not like to trust myself among a family all made up of Papists."

"You are very bigoted," said I, in a superior tone. "Don't you suppose there are as good

Christians among Papists as you call them, as there are among Protestants ? Don't you believe a Papist can be saved ?"

"As to that," answered Mercer readily, "that there are those among them that live up to their lights, such as they are, I don't deny, but I don't say nor believe that they are as good Christians as they would be if their lights were brighter. As to their being saved, that is no business of mine. I know that the Scriptures are very hard upon idolaters, especially those idolators who might know better."

"But the Papists do not worship images," I said. "The veneration of holy images is permitted because this veneration is not paid to the image itself, but to that which it represents."

"But the second commandment is explicit about that," returned Mercer. "That very veneration is forbidden, because we are not to bow down to them. Besides if there is nothing in the image itself, why do they venerate one image so much more than another ?"

"Oh, you are a great casuist," said I. "I wonder you do not take orders instead of going into a school. The long and the short of it is, you think it will be a fine thing to set up for yourself and to have a parcel of young ladies to govern."

"You are mistaken, madame," answered Mercer, with enough of dignity to make me ashamed of my petulance. "If you were to remain here in London or to go into the country, even down to that barbarous Cornwall, that my poor dear lady dreaded so much, I would give up all thoughts of going into the school, and stay with you as long as you wished, and that for your dear mother's sake as well as your own ; but into the family of Madame de Fayrolles I will not go. And I do beg and entreat you, Mrs. Yevette, to think twice before you do so. Think of what your mother would say—think !"

But the conversation was here interrupted by a call from my aunt. She did not seem at all displeased when I told her of Mercer's decision.

"It is just as well," said she. "Of course, if you wished for the good woman, and she desired to come, I should say nothing against it ; but it would not have been comfortable for her or you. But I wonder she should refuse so good an offer."

"It was a case of conscience, I believe," said I. "She was afraid of being converted."

"Oh, I understand. Well, petite, it is just as well. I shall have no difficulty. You shall take my second woman, who has been well trained and is an accomplished seamstress and hair-dresser. So, Mrs. Mercer," as that damsel entered the room—"you will not go with your young lady because you are afraid of being converted. Does not that in itself show you how weak your cause is, and how conscious you are of its weakness ?"

Madame spoke smilingly, and Mercer answered also with a twinkle of the eye.

"If I might venture to put a case, madame ?"

"Go on," said my aunt.

"Suppose, madame, one of your own family, a woman neither very bright nor very learned, should be offered a service in a Protestant family, where she would be likely all the time to hear her own faith attacked by an accomplished Protestant minister—what would your ladyship advise her to do?"

"Fairly posed," returned my aunt, laughing good-naturedly. "Well, well, I will not urge you. But at least accept this little remembrance from me," she added, drawing out a very elegant little étui, with pencil tablets and all complete. "It will be useful to you and is valuable in itself."

Mercer accepted the present with many thanks, and retired.

"That is a good soul," said my aunt. "What a pity she is not a Catholic? She might have a real vocation."

The next day I removed to the lodgings which my uncle and aunt had been inhabiting for some time, and my uncle's establishment was broken up. He gave me all my poor aunt's wardrobe, except her most valuable jewels, and I in turn bestowed upon Mercer such of the things as were likely to be useful to her, together with a number of books of devotion which had belonged to Aunt Jem's mother. Mercer was profuse in her thanks, and we parted the best of friends. I visited the good woman many years afterward, and found her at the head of the school which she had entered, and though an old lady, still hale and strong, and ruling her little kingdom with a wise and vigorous hand. I took from among her young ladies, one to be waiting-gentlewoman to myself and my eldest daughter, and I have never had reason to regret the choice.

I had written to my Lord Stantoun asking permission to stay for a while with Madame de Fayrolles, and received a speedy answer, as some one from the neighborhood was coming direct to London. My lord evidently wrote in a good deal of irritation, and his letter was to the effect that he had not the least objection to my residing with Madame de Fayrolles since from all he could hear, she was a woman of reputation. He only hoped she had no sons to be bewitched—this sentence was scratched out, but I could read it. He sent me some money for my private purse and would remit more if I needed it. In short, it was plain that my lord dreaded nothing so much just now as having me returned on his hands. Theo, on the contrary, who wrote at the same time, gave me a most warm and pressing invitation to make my home with her, as long as I pleased, and she begged me to think twice before placing myself wholly in the hands of Madame de Fayrolles. I shall not repeat her arguments, though they were all good and wise. Indeed, I hardly read them myself. I could not endure the idea of returning to Devonshire on any terms.

I found a luxurious apartment prepared for me in the house Monsieur de Fayrolles had taken for the season, and here I remained for some two or three weeks, coaxed and flattered to the top of my bent. Every means was used to attach me to my new friends, and separate me from old ones. Neither my lord nor Theo said a word about Andrew, and I had not heard a word from Tre Madoc in a long time. I had asked Mr. Pepys about Andrew, and he admitted that he had heard the story of his approaching marriage from excellent authority, and believed it to be true.

From this time I became like one desperate. I put away my French Bible, so dear as having been my mother's, and the little brown English prayer-book she had carried off in our hasty flight from the Tour d'Antin. I could not make up my mind to destroy them, so I made them into a package, sealed them up, and committed them to Mercer's care, from whom I reclaimed them long afterward. I read only the books of controversy and devotion supplied to me by Father Martien. I began to use a rosary, and to fancy that I found comfort and help in praying to the virgin. I was quite ready to have made a profession of my new faith at this time, but to my surprise and disappointment, Father Martien put me off. He said I had not had time to know my own mind or to receive proper instruction. The truth was, I believe, he did not think it would be very safe either for my uncle or himself. There was in England a growing jealousy of Roman Catholics and their influence, a jealousy well founded enough in itself, though it culminated afterward in the follies and wickedness of the so-called Popish plot. It would be dangerous to have it known that a young lady of good family, a ward of my Lord Stantoun's, had been induced to abandon the English for the Romish Church.

This refusal, however, only increased my eagerness. I really persuaded myself that I embraced all those dogmas which I had been educated to regard with horror, as monstrous and profane. My aunt, while greatly edified by my devotion, was a little alarmed at it. It was at that time no part of her plan to have me become a religious, as she called it. She took me out with her a great deal, and paid great attention to my dress and manners. Both she and my uncle were very kind and indulgent, but they contrived to keep me in a kind of honorable restraint—a restraint so gentle that I never felt it at all. I was not permitted to visit by myself any of the young ladies of my own age whose acquaintance I had made at my Aunt Jemima's, and though my friends were made welcome and treated with great courtesy, yet somehow their visits gradually fell off, and I saw them no more.

In a few weeks we visited the Bath, as my aunt had proposed, and remained for some time seeing a good deal of gay company. From thence we went to Epsom, at which place the king was residing, though he kept no court and had very few about him, save the very most dissolute of his courtiers, for he had by this time thrown off all pretence to decency of conduct. It was at Epsom that Monsieur de Fayrolles received a summons to return at once to France. It seems he had some sort of command over the household guards, from which command he had been absent longer than his royal master approved.

My uncle received this notice in the morning at the hands of Father Martien, who had come down with some letters from the French ambassador. In the evening my gentlewoman came to me with a message desiring my immediate presence in my aunt's room. I found her seated beside her husband, while Father Martien stood behind her chair. The faces of all three wore a very solemn expression, and I trembled, I hardly knew why. My aunt bade me be seated. Zelie placed a chair for me and then at a sign from her mistress withdrew.

"Genevieve," said my uncle seriously, "the time has come for you to make a decisive choice as to your future conduct. We are obliged to return to France immediately. Will you return with us, embrace the true Catholic faith, and be to us as a daughter, or will you remain in this land of heretics, and return to my Lord Stantoun, or to his daughter who has invited you?"

"Nay, my friend, state the case fairly—that might not be the alternative," said madame. "Vevette might undoubtedly be married before we leave England, since Mr. Cunningham has made application for her hand already. Besides, her cousin, Mr. Corbet, is as we hear just about to re turn with his bride, and I dare say they would not be sorry to give Vevette a home."

This last news—I hope I do my aunt no injustice when I say I believe she made it up for the occasion—decided me. I was not a moment in saying that if monsieur pleased I would return to France with him.

"But if you return with us it must be as a Catholic," said my uncle. "I do not profess to be bigoted, but I cannot, I dare not, take an open heretic to the court of the most Christian king."

"Mademoiselle has already confessed to me her desire of being admitted into the bosom of our holy mother church," said Father Martien. "Is it not so, my daughter?"

"It is so," I answered quite calmly and resolvedly. "I am ready to make a profession at any time."

The priest and my aunt were loud in their expressions of gratitude to all the saints. My uncle merely said:

"That settles the matter then. We shall go to London to-morrow and from thence set out at once for Paris. There is no time to consult my Lord Stantoun, nor is there any need of doing so since he has given his consent to your residing with us."

The next day we went to London, where we remained less than a week, settling up affairs, paying off servants and tradespeople, and taking leave of our friends. I was in a high state of excitement, and it did not strike me at the time, but I well remember now that I was hardly left to myself a moment, and that care was taken that I should never have the opportunity of speaking alone with any of my Protestant friends. My good Mercer came to see me, but she was not admitted, nor did I know of her visit till long afterward. There was no need, however, of all these precautions. I was possessed of only one idea—to separate myself as far as possible from Andrew, and to get out of the country before he came into it. I felt as if I could have gone to the ends of the earth to avoid him. Besides I was delighted with the prospect of seeing Paris and Versailles, and that court my aunt described to me in such glowing colors. I conceived that I should be a person of a good deal of importance, and even began to have dreams of a grand alliance. As to love, I said to myself it was all sentimental nonsense, just fit for boys and girls. I had got over all that. In short, my heart was given to the world. That was the god of my idolatry, and it paid me the wages it usually bestows upon its votaries.

We were favored with a passage in a king's ship, and therefore fared better than most people do in crossing the channel, but we had a rough time. Every member of our party was sick but myself, and I had my hands full with waiting upon my aunt, who fell into all sorts of terrors and fits of the nerves, and was sure we were going to be drowned. However, we reached Calais in safety, and after waiting a day or two to refresh ourselves we took the way to Paris.

Whether it was that I had been so long away from France that I had forgotten how it looked, or that Normandy had been in a more flourishing condition than the other provinces, or finally, that I contrasted what I now saw with what I had seen in England, I cannot tell; but certainly the country looked terribly forlorn to me. There was little tillage, and what there was seemed by no means flourishing; the people had a crushed, oppressed, half-fed look which was very sad to see. Even when the vintage was going on there seemed very little rejoicing. Once, taking a by-road to avoid a hill, we came upon what must have been a flourishing vineyard a day or two before, but the vines were crushed and torn from their supports, and lay withering upon the ground, the beautiful grapes were scattered and spoiled, while two or three women with faces of blank despair were trying to rescue some of the fruit from the general destruction.

"Oh, the poor people!" I exclaimed; "what has happened to them?"

"A boar hunt probably," said my uncle indifferently.

"But why should that have wrought such ruin?" I asked.

"Because, little simpleton, the boar would as soon go through a vineyard as anywhere else, and when he does it is needful that the hunt should follow him, which is not very good for the vineyards."

"And so for the sake of some great man's pleasure of an hour or two the poor man's heritage is destroyed," said I indignantly. "What a shame! What wickedness!"

"Tut, tut! petite! Remember that we are not now in England where every clown can bring his lord to justice, but in France where nobles have privileges. But I wonder where the owner is. Where is your husband, my good woman?" he called out, as we came opposite the workers.

"Alas, monsieur, I do not know," answered the poor woman, with streaming eyes. "Monsieur the marquis was hunting yesterday and took a short cut through our vineyard to arrive the sooner, and my husband was so ill-advised as to utter some harsh words and maledictions which the marquis overheard; so he bade the huntsmen take him away and teach him better manners. Since then I have not seen him, and Heaven knows what has become of him. Oh, monsieur, if you would but intercede for us; I am sure my husband meant no harm."

"He should be more careful with his words," returned my uncle. "My good woman, I am not acquainted with your marquis, and cannot therefore take the liberty of speaking for your husband; but there is some money for you. Drive on, postilion."

My heart was sick with the injustice and tyranny, the effects of which I had just seen, but my aunt and uncle seemed to think little of it, and indeed I saw enough more sights of the same kind before we reached Paris. The simple truth was and is that in France the common people have no rights whatever, but are absolutely at the mercy of their lord. Their crops, the honor of their families, their very lives, depend upon his humor, and how great so-ever may be the wrong, there is no redress. I had seen little of this sort of thing in Normandy. The only great proprietor near the tour, besides my father and Monsieur Le Roy, who were both Huguenots, was a gentleman of great kindness, and one who made a conscience of dealing justly with his people. I was heart-sick before we reached our destination, and wished twenty times I were back in England.

We arrived in Paris at last, and I found myself dazzled by the splendid buildings and the grand equipages which met my eyes on every hand. The streets, it was true, were quite as dirty as London, but there was no fog or coal smoke to obscure the air or blacken the house fronts. My aunt was in the best of spirits at being once more in her dear native city, but I could not help thinking my uncle rather grave and preoccupied. As to Father Martien he was always the same under every circumstance, and I have no doubt would have preserved the same calm countenance whether he were watching the agonies of a heretic on the wheel, or being himself served with the same sauce by the Iroquois.

My uncle had a fine hotel in a fashionable situation, and as a courier had been sent before us we found everything ready for our reception. I was assigned a small room which looked into a court, and had no exit but through my aunt's reception-room. It was prettily furnished enough, but I took a dislike to it from the first, because it reminded me of my little turret-room at the Tour d'Antin, which I would have preferred of all things to forget.

I had looked forward to Paris as a scene of gayety and splendor far beyond anything I had ever seen, and so it was, but I very soon found that the gayety and splendor were not for me. It was not that my aunt meant to be unkind; on the contrary, at that time she was amiability itself, but in France a young lady of good family lives before her marriage in a state of as much seclusion as if she were in a convent. In fact almost every French young lady is placed in a convent at a very early age, from which she only emerges to be married to the man not of her own, but of her parents' choice, whom she perhaps never saw more than twice and never a moment alone, till she was married to him.

I could not complain of being treated as other girls were, but I must confess I found the life a very dull one. My aunt lost no time in securing for me the services of a music and a dancing master, and she often took me out with her in the coach, but I had no companions of my own age. I was not at all well. I had been accustomed to a great deal of exercise all my life, and that in the fresh air, and the state of excitement in which I had been kept for such a length of time began to tell on me. I slept very little and was troubled by frightful dreams, which almost always took me back to the Tour d'Antin, and the dangers I had undergone there, or, what was still worse, I read and worked and prayed with my mother, and then waked to an intolerable sense of want and desolation. I told Father Martien of these dreams. He looked grave, pronounced them direct temptations of the devil, and said he feared I had some sin or some concealment yet upon my conscience which gave the evil spirit power over me. I assured him that such was not the case; but he still looked grave, bade me search my conscience anew, advised a retreat, and gave me to read the "Four Weeks' Meditations of Saint Ignatius." This retreat and course of study were to be my final preparation for the public profession which I was to make. In the course of it I secluded myself entirely in my room, which was so far darkened that I had only light enough to read. I fasted rigorously, saw no company, was allowed no recreation, and no employment save my rosary and my book of meditations. And such meditations—full of the grossest and most material images of death and its consequences—the decay of the senses, the desolation of the sick-room and the dying-bed, the corruption of the body, the flames and brimstone, the wheels and spits of purgatory and hell! In the midst of all this the penitent is invited to pause and resolve seriously upon his or her vocation, just at the time and in the state when she is most incapable of judging reasonably of anything. No wonder the book has been instrumental in leading so many into the cloister.

I finished my month's retreat and was admitted into the fold of the Holy Catholic Church, as she dares to call herself, in the chapel of the king himself, who had taken a great interest in my story. I should like to give my reader an account of this important passage of my life, but in truth I remember very little about it. I have an indistinct recollection of knocking at a closed door and requesting admission to the church, of various chants and prayers, of censers and waxen tapers, but it is all like a confused dream. In fact, I was already very ill, though nobody suspected it. I recollect receiving a great many congratulations, and being saluted by the king himself, who, having been *converted* himself (save the mark), took a great interest in all converts. The next morning found me in the stupor of such a fever as I had suffered in Jersey, and for two or three weeks I lay between life and death, unconscious of everything. At last, however, the disease took a turn, and I was pronounced out of danger. For some time longer I lay quietly in my bed, slowly gaining strength and the ability to think connectedly. I was indeed like one waking from a long dream, and I began to realize what I had done. All the instructions I had received in my youth—the very psalms I had learned from my foster-mother—returned upon me, and would not be put aside. My eyes were opened, and I was compelled to see and to own that I had deliberately sold myself to the world, and that unless I could find a place of repentance—which did not yet appear to me—I must reckon upon paying the price of the bargain, namely, my immortal soul. Little did my aunt and my nurse guess, while I lay so quietly with closed eyes, what was going on within. I would have given worlds to weep, but I had no tears. Neither could I pray. My heart was dry as dust, and the unmeaning repetitions which had served me instead of prayers now inspired me with nothing but weariness and disgust. Oh, how I hated that image of the Virgin which stood opposite my bed, dressed in laces and satin, and wearing my own mother's pearl clasp! I had myself given it away for this purpose in one of my fits of devotion. If I had dared I would have crushed the simpering waxen baby under my feet. The stronger I grew, the more wretched I found myself. I was obliged to go to confession, but Father Martien's threats and cajoleries had no more effect upon me than to make me hate him, as the one who had led me into the snare from which I could see no escape, unless it were such a martyrdom as my father's, or the slower hidden agonies of a convent prison. For these I was by no means prepared, and I well knew they were what awaited me if I allowed my change of feeling to become known. The king, as I have hinted, had been converted by the jubilee which had taken place some years before. He was still in the fervor of his first love, and as his spiritual guides could not succeed in making him give up Madame de Montespan and company, they compromised by urging him on to more and greater acts of severity against the so-called heretics. One might be an unbeliever even to denying the existence of a God at all, but to be a Huguenot, or even a Jansenist, was an unpardonable sin. Two or three great men, indeed, who were necessary to him by their talents as soldiers or statesmen, were allotted a sort of protection, but even these soon found their lives unbearable, and either conformed like Turenne afterward, or fled from the kingdom. For a young girl like myself, away from all near friends, and, above all, one who had only lately conformed, there would be no hope. Even a suspicion of relapse would lead at once to a convent with all its possible horrors. No, there was no escape. I had left my Lord, and he had left me. I had denied him, and he would deny me. I must go on as I had begun, and that to the bitter end.

It was not one of the least of my troubles that I felt all my love for Andrew revive again. I began to doubt the truth of the stories I had heard, and to wonder whether they had not been invented for the very sake of entrapping me. Doubt soon grew into conviction, and, reasonably or unreasonably, I no more believed that Andrew was married than that I was. No, he would return in a year—return to claim me and to find that I was lost to him, to truth, and heaven forever. It was in the church where I was kneeling for the first time since my illness that this thought came to me, and I cast myself on the ground and groaned almost aloud. My aunt observed the movement, as indeed nothing escaped her eyes, and when she returned she remarked upon it, saying that such a display of devotion, however commendable in private, was not in good taste in such a public place, and that I would do well to restrain myself. About this time Father Martien was called away, and I made my confessions to a fat old priest at our parish church, who, I am persuaded, used to doze through half the time of confession and take snuff the other half. He was very kind, however, and gave me easy penances and plentiful absolutions. My religion had by this time become the merest form, kept up to save appearances, but now and then would recur the thought that perhaps Father Martien was right after all, and if so why I was living in mortal sin, a sacrilegious person for whom millions of ages in purgatory would be of no avail. Thus I was tossed from one doubt to another, and found comfort nowhere.

The discomfort of my mind could not but react upon my body. I grew pale, sallow, and was miserably unwell. My aunt lamented the loss of my beauty, and predicted that I should never find a husband. A husband indeed was what I now feared most of all. I determined that I would die before I would accept one, and then came the thought that not death would be the alternative but a convent. No, there was no hope anywhere.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

WE remained in the neighborhood of Paris all that winter, sometimes at Fontainebleau, sometimes in the city itself, for, as I have said, my uncle had some office or command which kept him about the court. My aunt had her balls and assemblies, her grand banquets and little suppers, and must have spent a great deal of money. I rarely saw anything of this gayety, though I went out with my aunt in the carriage, and now and then, when she had a small assembly, I was allowed to sit at her elbow and look on, though I was not expected to speak unless spoken to, and then only in the shortest, most restrained manner. Of the court I saw nothing. My aunt had hoped, I believe, to procure some place for herself, but in that she did not succeed. Still she was often at the court, and was liked by the king for her wit and sprightliness. When she was away my only society was my maid Zelie, whom I had never liked, and now thoroughly distrusted, believing her to be a spy upon me, my aunt's lapdog and her parrot.

My only recreation was in reading the very few books which were thought proper for a young lady, my music, and my embroidery, and I only went out to go to church, whither I was attended by Zelie or an older woman who had been my aunt's nurse, and who, having been a Huguenot in her youth and then converted, was of course doubly zealous and devoted. Oh, to what a slavery had I brought myself! With what impassioned longing I looked back to the days when I used to climb the hill at Tre Madoc to attend to my little school or run down to the beach to watch the pilchard-fishing, and of those earlier times in Normandy when I played with Lucille and David in the orchards, or helped to pile up the golden and rosy apples for the cider-mill! I would gladly have changed places with the poorest old woman in Cornwall for the privilege of walking abroad unfettered, and weeping my fill unwatched. I would have given all the costly furniture of our hotel, had it been mine, for half a dozen loose leaves of my mother's old prayer-book, for it was one of my great troubles that I could not remember the words of Scripture. I suppose it might have been some odd effect of my illness, but while my memory had become clear as to other things, it was in that respect almost a blank. In the state of mind I then was, I regarded this forgetfulness as a direct judgment from Heaven, and an express proof and mark of my reprobation. I thirsted for the water of life. I read again and again the few psalms and meagre bits of scripture contained in my books of devotion. That fountain was to be once more unsealed for me, but not till I had drank my fill of the bitter waters and broken cisterns for which I had forsaken it.

Meantime affairs were not going well with my uncle. I was told nothing, but I gathered from things that I overheard and from hints dropped in my presence that he had lost the favor of his royal master in the first place by outstaying his leave in England, and though he had hoped to make his peace by the presentation of a new convert to the Catholic faith, the offering had not been altogether sufficient. Court favor is of all earthly things one of the most uncertain. My uncle had been a friend of the unhappy Madame de Valliere, who, at this time under the name of Sister Louise de la Misericorde, was striving to expiate her errors by a life of more than ordinary austerity among the Carmelite nuns of Paris. He had had the imprudence to speak contemptuously of Madame de Montespan, and his remarks had been carried to the lady's ears by one of those tale-bearers who flourish at court. Of course madame became his enemy. She had great influence with the king, though not so much as Madame de Maintenon came to have afterward. My uncle's disgrace grew more and more apparent every day, and at last he received peremptory orders to retire to his château in Provence, where he held some sort of office under government. He was allowed, however, to remain in Paris for two or three weeks, to settle up his affairs there, which were, I imagine, in no little confusion.

My aunt was in despair. To be banished from court was to be cast out of heaven in her estimation. She hated the country, and went thither even for a few weeks with unwillingness. She wept and went into fits of the nerves, as she usually did under any disturbance of mind or body. The poor lady was really very ill for a few days, and as I was the only person who had the least control over her in her paroxysms I had my hands full. However, she had an elastic constitution of mind and body, and she soon recovered, and began planning all sorts of amusements, one of which, I remember, was to be the refurnishing of the Château de Fayrolles from top to bottom. I was glad to see her diverted by anything, and I listened to all her schemes, and being ready with my pencil was able to afford her pleasure by sketching designs for furniture, hangings, and the like, which even my uncle declared to be very clever.

One day, being left to myself while my aunt entertained a visitor, I began drawing from memory a sketch of my old home, the Tour d'Antin. I became so interested in my work as to take no note of the time, till I was surprised by the entrance of my uncle and Father Martien. I had not seen the latter gentleman for some weeks, nor was I at all glad to behold him now. My religion had become to me more and more an empty profession, and though I still went regularly to mass and confession, my attendance was the merest form. At mass and vespers, though I kept my book open, I thought of anything rather than the services, and as to my confessions, if I had repeated the Confiteor correctly, and then gone on in the orthodox devout whisper to say that I had become a Moslem and the fifteenth wife of the Grand Bashaw, good old Father Le Moyne would have been none the wiser, but would have given me absolution in his usual gentle, nasal sing-song. I had learned to love and respect the old man, for though indolent to a degree, he was kind and fatherly, and did not disgrace himself with wine or worse things, and it was with real dismay that I contemplated exchanging him for the sharp-sighted, cold Father Martien.

My uncle looked at the sketch and commended it, saying that it showed real talent. He then began asking me questions about it, sitting down with the drawing in his hand. At last,

"There is one thing, Vevette, which I have hesitated to ask you about, not wishing to revive painful memories; but the time has arrived when such an inquiry becomes necessary. Where did your father conceal his treasure?"

"His treasure!" I repeated; "I don't understand."

My uncle contracted his brows.

"Do not trifle with me," said he sternly. "I am well informed that my unhappy brother invested a great deal of the money which he acquired in one way and another in plate and jewels. What did he do with them ? I know that he left them concealed somewhere about the estate ; but where ?"

"I do not know," I answered, with perfect truth ; "I know that he and my cousin"—I could not bring myself to say *Andrew*—"hid away a part of what silver there was, but I never heard what they did with it. He sold a good deal, I know."

"And what disposition did he make of the money ?"

"He turned a large part of it into diamonds. The rest he left with my foster-father, Simon Sablot, who afterward brought it to my mother in England."

"And the jewels, my daughter, what of them ?" asked Father Martien.

"Oh, we carried them to England with us," I answered, inwardly rejoicing to give an answer so little satisfactory. "My mother sold them in London, and invested a part of the money in a little estate at Tre Madoc—the Welles House. The rest is in the hands of my lord, unless he has put it into land."

My uncle stamped his foot and bit his lip with vexation. It seems he thought his brother had left his treasures concealed, and hoped by my means to lay hands upon them. No doubt they would have made a very welcome supply at that time.

"Are you telling the exact truth, daughter ?" asked Father Martien sternly.

"I am telling the exact truth, so far as I know it," I answered, with some spirit. "There may be some of the silver still concealed at the Tour d'Antin, but if so I do not know where it is."

"Where should you think it would be most likely to be hidden?" was the next question.

"That I cannot tell either," I answered; "but I suppose the vault under the tower would be as probable a place as any."

"Is there not a vault under the old chapel?" asked Father Martien.

"Yes," I answered; "a burial vault."

"Have you ever been in it?"

"Yes, once; at the burial of one of our servants," I replied, availing myself of the orthodox Jesuit doctrine of mental reservation.

"Do you think your father would be likely to place the treasure in that vault?" was the next question.

"I do not know as to that," I answered. "I suppose he might. But I rather imagine that what silver there was was buried somewhere about the orchard."

My uncle continued questioning me for some time, but as I could not tell him what I did not know, he was not much the wiser for my replies. He did not half believe that we had carried off the jewels, and declared that he meant to write to Lord Stantoun on the subject of "my property," as I called it.

"It *is* mine," I replied indignantly; "my mother left it to me."

My uncle laughed contemptuously.

"Your mother had no more right to it than you have," said he. "Being married to your father, as they presume to say, by a Protestant minister, the marriage is no marriage by law. It was not worth a pin. You are an illegitimate child, and as such have no rights whatever. My brother's succession belongs to me, and I intend to have it."

"It is the truth, my daughter," said Father Martien, as I looked at him. "The blasphemous parody of the holy sacrament of marriage with which your wretched and guilty parents were united was not only invalid but was of itself a grievous crime in the eye of the law as well as of the Church."

If I had had the power of life and death in my hands I should at that moment have laid both of these men dead at my feet. In my rage I actually looked around for a weapon, and it was well for all parties that there was none at hand. Then, as the conviction of my utter helplessness and desolation came over me, I burst into an agony of tears.

"Hush, my daughter!" said the priest. "These tears do not become you. Let your natural affection for your parents be laid upon the altar of that church which they spurned, and it may become a merit. Indulged, it is in your case a sin against God and our holy religion."

My uncle, devout Catholic as he was, had not lost all feeling, nor was he a man to be put down in his own house even by a priest. He silenced the Father by a look, and then set himself to soothe me, saying that though he had thought it needful to tell me the truth, he should not visit upon me the misfortune of my birth, but should continue to regard me as a daughter so long as I showed myself dutiful to him and to my aunt. He bade me retire to my room and compose myself, saying that he would make my excuses.

"I am going into the country for a few days," said he. "When I return I shall hope to find that you have recovered your spirits and are prepared to submit to any arrangement your friends may think it best to make for your welfare."

My uncle gave me his hand as far as the door of my apartment, and parted from me with a fatherly salute, recommending me to lie down and rest awhile. He was very kind to me for the rest of the day, and seemed by his manner to wish to make me forget the harshness he had used toward me.

The next morning he called me into his own room and put into my hands a letter he had written to my Lord Stantoun. It was to the effect that, having embraced the Catholic faith, and being resolved in future to make my home with my father's brother, I desired to have all my property put into the hands of Monsieur de Fayrolles, my natural guardian.

"You will copy this letter," said my uncle, "and I will inclose it in one of my own to my Lord Staunton. If he is an honest man he will see the justice and wisdom of such an arrangement. If he is not, I must take other measures, for I am resolved not to be cheated of my right. Sit down here and copy the letter."

I had nothing for it but to obey, my uncle all the time standing by and observing me. When the copy was finished he inclosed both letters in an envelope, and was just about sealing them when my aunt called upon him. With an expression of impatience he laid down the unsealed letter and went into the next room. In a moment I had turned down the corner of the sheet and written in small characters, "Don't, for Heaven's sake."

It was the work of a moment, and when my uncle returned he found me reading a book I had taken from the table. He reproved me for opening a book without leave, but seeing that it was only a play of Monsieur Racine's I had taken up, told me to keep it if I liked. He sealed the letter without looking at it again, told me he was pleased with my compliance, and gave me a gold piece to buy ribbons with, as he said. I was not sorry to receive it, for I was already turning over in my head plans of escape, and I knew that any plan I could form would need money to carry it out.

My uncle was absent several days, and came back in anything but a good humor. He had not succeeded in finding the treasure, if there was any to find, neither had he succeeded in letting the land. The house, having been reduced by the fire to a mere empty shell, had partly fallen in and filled up the cellars, while of the vault under the chapel he said the whole floor seemed to have sunk into some abyss.

"So there really was a cavern underneath," I said. "There was a tradition to that effect, and my father always believed that such a cavern existed, and that it had some connection with the sea."

"It might have a connection with the infernal regions, judging from the sounds which proceed from it," said my uncle. "I was near falling into it headlong. It is the more vexatious because there are niches around the wall which have evidently been built up—one even quite lately."

"And they are quite inaccessible?" said my aunt.

"Oh, entirely. The whole building is so ruinous that one enters it only at the risk of one's life."

"The niches are only burial-places," I ventured to say, thinking at the same time that poor Grace's grave would now at least be safe from insult.

"Yes, but they may have been used for deposits of another sort. However, there is no use in thinking more about the matter. You are looking better, Vevette. I am glad to see you try to put on a more cheerful face. Your countenance lately has been a perpetual kill-joy—fit only for a convent of Carmelites."

Indeed, my health had improved. The very thought of escape, impracticable as it seemed at present, had put new life into me. I began to take a little care of myself, and to be anxious to acquire strength.

"I do not think, my friend, that the convent of the Carmelites will be Vevette's vocation," said my aunt, smiling; "I have an affair of great importance to lay before you when we are at leisure."

A cold chill struck to my heart as I heard these words and guessed what they might mean. The event proved that my forebodings were well founded. There was a certain Monsieur de Luynes, an elderly gentleman of good family, and very wealthy, who often visited my aunt, being indeed some sort of connection. This gentleman had lost his wife many years before, and having married off all his daughters he had conceived the idea of providing a companion and nurse for his declining years. He was hideously ugly—tall, shambling, with bushy gray eyebrows, and a great scar on his cheek which had affected the shape of one of his eyes; but his manners were amiable and kind, and he had the reputation of leading a remarkably good life. He had always taken a good deal of notice of me, and had once or twice drawn me into conversation as I sat at my aunt's side, and I had thought him very agreeable. It was this Monsieur de Luynes who now made a formal proposal for my hand. I was not at all consulted in the matter. I was simply called into my aunt's boudoir, told of the proposal which had been made, and ordered to consider myself the future wife of Monsieur de Luynes.

"There is no reason for any delay," said my aunt. "Monsieur, who is himself very wealthy, does not ask for any dôt with you. The trousseau can be prepared in a few days, and I will engage it shall be a fine one. You will be a happy woman, petite."

"Yes indeed; you may consider yourself most fortunate," added my uncle. "Considering the misfortune of your birth and your state of poverty and dependence, it is a match far beyond anything we have a right to expect for you. It will give me great pleasure to see you established at the head of Monsieur de Luynes' fine house before I leave Paris."

My resolution was taken in a moment. If Monsieur de Luynes' offer had come to me at the beginning of my residence in France I should instantly have accepted it, and rejoiced in the opportunity of doing so. But my mind had changed. I know not how, but I was just as certain that Andrew had remained faithful to me as if he himself had told me, and being so assured I would have suffered myself to be thrown into the fire rather than marry any one else. I waited till my uncle had done speaking, and then, with a calmness which amazed myself, I told him of my determination.

"Tut!" said he; "let me hear no such girlish folly. You will do what I consider best for you, and take care you do it with a good grace or it will be the worse for you."

"Nay, do not be severe with Vevette," said my aunt. "All girls think it necessary to put on such airs and make such declarations. Leave her to me."

Left to my aunt I was, and I set myself to soften her heart toward me. I begged only to be allowed to remain single, promising to be guided by her in everything else—to perform any menial service, to work my fingers to the bone. All was in vain. My aunt laughed at my entreaties, considering them only as the wilfulness of a child ; told me the time would come when I would thank her for not yielding to my folly. Finally losing patience, as I continued weeping, she let me feel the iron hand masked under the velvet glove. She told me in severe tones that my wilfulness was unbearable, and that unless I gave way and did what was thought best for me I should be sent to that same Carmelite convent to be brought to my senses.

"We have wished to be kind to you," she added ; "but there are means of subduing refractory girls which the good sisters well know how to practise, and of which you shall make trial if you are disobedient. Now go to your room, dry your eyes, and let me see you looking your best when Monsieur de Luynes comes this evening."

I had nothing for it but to comply. My resolution was fixed as ever. They might send me to the Carmelites, starve me, bury me alive if they would, but I would never marry—never ! However, I thought best to temporize. The evening found me dressed, my aunt herself looking over my toilette and commending my docility.

"I thought you would see the propriety of giving way," said she ; "and I am glad for your sake you have done so. You would not have liked to be shut up alone in the charnel-house of the convent, without light or food for twenty-four hours together, as happened to a cousin of my own who set herself up against her father's authority. No, it is much better to be in my salon than in the company of mouldy skeletons."

I held my tongue; but I could have said that I should have preferred the society of the mouldiest Carmelite ever buried in sackcloth to that of Monsieur de Luynes. The kind old man was very attentive to me, made many gallant speeches, and presented me with a magnificent box of bon-bons and preserved fruits, containing also a beautiful pearl clasp. I almost wished I could have loved him, and indeed if my heart had not been full of another I believe I should have married him, if only to escape from my present state of servitude. But there it was: I loved Andrew. I should always love him, and I could never marry any one else, whether I ever saw him again or not.

Under ordinary circumstances I should never have been left alone with my intended bridegroom till after the ceremony; but my aunt had a great opinion of the discretion and goodness of Monsieur de Luynes, which indeed he well deserved. She also trusted a good deal, I fancy, to his powers of persuasion, for she allowed him more than once to remain *tête-à-tête* with me for an hour or two at a time in the little salon, while she entertained her visitors or gave audience to the tradespeople who were busied with my wedding outfit. On one of these occasions I took a desperate resolution and opened to Monsieur de Luynes my whole heart. Monsieur tried hard to shake me, promising me every sort of good, and even going so far as to hint that I should, in the course of nature, outlive him; and then, being a widow, I could go where I liked and do as I pleased. Finding, however, that even this agreeable prospect failed to move me, and that I was settled in my resolution, after two or three interviews he bade me farewell with much kindness, and going to my uncle formally retracted his suit, saying that he would never wed an unwilling bride.

My aunt's anger was loud and voluble; my uncle's more silent and much more terrible. He said little except to bid me retire to my room. Here I remained till evening, without notice of any kind. That night my lodging was changed to a bare attic at the top of the house, lighted only by a window in the roof, and furnished with a pallet bed, a straw chair, and a crucifix, with its vessel of holy water underneath. Into this cell I was locked by my uncle's own hands, and here I remained prisoner for a fortnight, seeing nobody but my aunt's women, who once a day brought me a meagre supply of coarse food. I had but one companion—an ugly gray cat, which lived in the neighboring garret, and made her way to my cell through a hole in the wainscot, attracted, I suppose, by the smell of my soup. She shared my meals by day and my bed at night, and, I doubt not, sincerely regretted my departure. I have always loved and patronized ugly gray cats for her sake.

I was happier in this garret than I had been before in a long time. I had lived absolutely without prayer ever since my illness, for my repetitions of the rosary might as well have been repetitions of "Cruel Barbara Allen," for all the devotion there had been in them. But somehow my firm decision not to marry any one but my first love had brought help and comfort to me. It had been a step in the right direction. When first locked into my prison cell I had thrown myself on my knees and besought help from Heaven to hold firm my resolution. That prayer had opened the way for others. I began to review my life and sincerely to repent the sins which had brought me into such straits. I saw and recognized the fact that the double-mindedness which had always been my bane had in this instance lain at the root of my apostasy. I confessed the justice of my Heavenly Father, and was enabled wholly to surrender myself into his hands for time and eternity; and I received comfort, and even joy, such as I had never found before. At the end of a fortnight my uncle visited me again and inquired whether I were now ready to submit my will to his. Modestly, I hope, but certainly with firmness, I declared my determination unchanged, and was ordered instantly to prepare for a journey.

* * *

CHAPTER XX.

"YOU SHALL HAVE NO CHOICE."

I EXPECTED nothing less than to be taken at once to the Carmelite convent with which I had been threatened. I was therefore agreeably surprised when, on being led to the courtyard I found all my uncle's servants assembled, and his own travelling-carriage waiting, with my aunt already seated in it. There were three vacant places, one of which I was desired to take, while my uncle placed himself in the other, and my aunt's gentlewoman took the fourth. There was a great deal of running back and forth for small packages which had been forgotten, a great deal of ordering and counter-ordering, of pulling at straps and examining of buckles ; but at last all was ready, and we set out. My aunt had not spoken to me at all, but as we passed a fine house which was being newly repaired and decorated she broke out with,

"And to think, ungrateful girl, that all that might have been yours, and you must throw it all away for a whim !"

I made no answer, for there was nothing to be said.

"There is no use in talking further on that matter, madame," said my uncle; "Vevette has made her decision, and she must abide the consequences. Henceforth she will have no choice as to what she will do. All will be decided for her, and it is possible she may come to regret Monsieur de Luynes."

"That may well be, my uncle, since Monsieur de Luynes was a true friend, who did not expect to gain any hidden treasures by his kindness," I answered. "But I shall never regret having acted honorably by him, whatever happens."

My uncle bit his lip, as well he might, and I saw the waiting-woman look out of the window to hide a smile. She knew all about my uncle's journey to Normandy, and, like others of her class, she enjoyed a hit at her betters.

"Be silent!" said my uncle sternly; "nobody wishes to hear the sound of your voice. Speak only when you are spoken to."

I obeyed, and, indeed, I had no inclination to talk. The morning was beautiful, and the spring was just coming on, and, forlorn as it looked, I was delighted to see the open country once more, and to breathe an air not poisoned with the thousand and one smells—not to use a stronger word—of Paris. The king could indeed crush and impoverish his poor people to maintain his armies and his mistresses, but he could not hinder the wild flowers from blooming nor the birds from singing. My spirits rose insensibly, and I more than once caught myself on the point of breaking out into a song. My uncle sat back in the corner and said nothing. My aunt kept up a perpetual prattle with Susanne, now bewailing her banishment from Paris and the court, now remarking upon this or that fine lady, and listening to the tittle-tattle in which Susanne was a proficient. At last my uncle said he would ride on horseback a while, so his groom was called up with the spare horse, and we women were left to ourselves. Then my aunt fell upon me, and such a rating as she gave me! I have heard English women scold, but I never heard any fishwoman equal my elegant, double-refined aunt, Madame de Fayrolles. She worked herself up into such a passion that she told a good deal more than she meant, and thus I learned that my Lord Stantoun had returned a very short and sharp answer to Monsieur de Fayrolles' letter, absolutely refusing to let him have any of the property intrusted to him, and requiring that I should at once return to England. So my friends had not quite forgotten or forsaken me. That was some comfort, but I dared not say so. My aunt went on, growing more and more excited, till she ended with,

"And when I thought at least I should have you to help me at Fayrolles, to draw patterns for my embroidery, and sing and read aloud to me, I cannot even enjoy that."

"But indeed, aunt, I will do anything for you—singing or reading, or whatever you please," I said soothingly, for I was afraid of one of her fits of nerves. "There is nothing in my power that I will not do for you if you will let me, at Fayrolles or anywhere else. You know we agreed to work chairs upon satin for the salon, and I have several patterns drawn already."

"Yes, but you won't be at Fayrolles!" said my aunt between her sobs; and then, catching a warning glance from Susanne, she said no more.

Then I was not to go to Fayrolles! What did they mean to do with me? To send me back to England? That was not likely, after what my uncle had said about my having no choice. Probably I should be placed in some country convent, where I should be out of reach of all help, whatever happened, and where no one would ever hear from me again. This was what I dreaded of all things. I had almost given up any belief in the faith I had lately professed, and the question occurred to me whether I ought not openly to confess the change which had come over me. I knew only too well what such a confession involved—either a life-long imprisonment or a horrible death—perhaps being left to perish by inches in some underground cell, amid rats and vermin. Such things happened all the time. Worse even than that, I knew that many of the convents were sinks of iniquity—places of resort for idle young gentlemen and wickeder women, like that of Port Royal, which afterward passed through so many vicissitudes. I am very far from saying that they were all of this character, but a great many of them were so, even taking the accounts of Roman Catholics themselves.* A residence in such a community was no pleasant prospect. And was I, after all, ready to die for my faith? Had I indeed any assured faith to die for? Might not Father Martien be right after all? My mind was tossed upon a sea of doubt and conjecture, and for a time found no rest; but at last I was enabled to pray, and to cast myself, more completely than I had ever done before, upon the arms of mercy. I asked for light and help above all things, and light and help were given me, not all at once, but by degrees. I became sensible of a sweet calm and clearness of mind, in which I saw all things more plainly. I felt sure that my many sins had been forgiven and washed away, and that when the time came for action I should have strength given me to act for the best. I had plenty of time for my own thoughts, for my uncle soon re-entered the carriage, and after that my aunt did not venture to speak to me again, though she talked at me whenever there was a chance. She was a woman who bore discomfort of any kind very ill, and the more weary she grew with her journey the more unbearable grew her peevish fretfulness. At last my uncle was moved to speak sharply to her, whereupon she fell into one of her nervous fits, and I had to exert all my skill to keep her from throwing herself out of the carriage. With much expenditure of coaxing and soothing I got her quieted at last, and persuaded her to take some refreshment, after which she fell asleep. I fancy my attentions softened her heart toward me, for she was much more kind to me during the rest of the day, and I thought even interceded for me with her husband ; but if so it was without avail, and even increased my troubles. For the whole of the next day I travelled with my former maid, Zelie, and the old woman I had spoken of. They understood my disgrace well enough, and did all in their power to make me feel it, treating me with the utmost insolence and neglect, so that at the inns where we stopped I had the most wretched lodgings imaginable, and really went hungry while my jailers, for such they were, feasted upon dainties at my uncle's expense. In this, however, they overshot the mark and brought themselves into trouble. My uncle, remarking in the morning upon my extreme paleness, asked whether I was ill.

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* See Racine's Memoirs of Port Royal. Letters of St. Francis de Sales, and almost any free-spoken memoirs of the time.

"No, monsieur," I answered, "I am not ill, but I am hungry. I have had not a morsel since yesterday noon but some crusts of mouldy black bread, which I could not have eaten if I had been starving."

Monsieur turned angrily upon Zelie, who stammered and denied and charged me with falsehood ; but my uncle knew me well enough to believe what I said, and my face spoke for itself. I was once more removed to my aunt's carriage, and fared as she did, and the rest of the way was more comfortable. Susanne had always been friendly to me.

During my imprisonment she had more than once smuggled comforts into my cell, and when we were alone together she spoke to me with kindness and pity. My aunt's heart evidently softened to me more and more, but my uncle was implacable. To cross him once was to make him an enemy forever ; I had disappointed him in every way, and he meant to make me feel the full force of his displeasure.

I had gathered from the servants that our first destination was Marseilles. As we drew near that city we passed company after company of unhappy wretches destined for the galleys, laboring along, chained together, and driven like cattle to the slaughter. Many of them were condemned for no crime but that of having attended a preaching, or prayed in their own families—that of being Protestants, in short—and these were linked oftentimes to the most atrocious criminals, whose society must have been harder to bear than their chains. But more than once or twice man's cruelty was turned to the praise of God, and the criminal was converted by the patience and the instructions of his fellow.

As we passed one of these sad cavalcades my uncle stopped the coach to ask some questions, and I was brought face to face with one I knew right well. It was an aged preacher who had long known my father, and had often been at our home in Normandy. I had no mind to have him recognize me, and I turned away my face to hide my overflowing tears. Monsieur did not at first recognize the old preacher, but the other knew him in a moment, and called him by name.

"What, Monsieur Morin, is this you!" said my uncle; "I thought you were dead!"

"I soon shall be," answered the old man calmly. "Happily for me, I am more than seventy years old, and my prison-doors must soon be opened. Then I shall receive my reward; but you—ah, Henri, my former pupil, whom I so loved, how will it be with you? Oh, repent, while there is yet time! There is mercy even for the denier and the apostate!"

For all answer, my uncle, transported with rage, lifted his cane and struck the old man a severe blow. The very criminals cried shame upon him, and the young officer in charge hastened to the spot, and with expressions of pity offered his own handkerchief to the poor old man, whose brow was cut and bleeding.

"Well," said my uncle, turning to me, and seeing, I suppose, what I thought, "how do you like the way your former friends are treated? How would you like to share their lot?"

"I would rather be that old man than you, monsieur!" I returned, on fire with indignation. "I would rather be the helpless prisoner than the coward that abuses him!"

"Coward!" repeated my uncle, white with rage.

"Dastard, if you like it better!" I returned, reckless of consequences. "To strike a helpless man is cowardly; to strike an old and feeble man is dastardly!"

Monsieur de Fayrolles, like others of his stamp, was easily put down when any one stood up to him. I have seen him fairly outfaced by his own valet. He muttered something between his teeth. My aunt, who, to do her justice, was greatly shocked, put a little money into the old man's hand, and the carriage moved on.

We arrived at Marseilles about noon, and my heart bounded with joy as I saw in the harbor a ship with English colors. Could it be that I was to be sent back to England after all? I was soon undeceived. We drove through the town to a convent which stood by itself, surrounded as usual with a high wall. Here the carriage stopped. My uncle and aunt alighted, and were admitted by the portress, and I remained in the carriage with Susanne. A number of men who looked like carpenters were returning from their work, and passed us, glancing at the carriage as they did so. "Here is another of the king's passenger birds!" I heard one of them say. I was trying to think what he could mean, when a sort of overseer who was following the men looked at me, stopped, and called me by name. It was my foster-brother, David Sablot.

"Mademoiselle! mademoiselle!" said Susanne.

"Ah, Susanne, it is my foster-brother, perhaps the last friend I shall ever see," I pleaded. "Let me speak to him for but one moment."

"Speak quickly, then," said Susanne, and with that she turned her back to me and began looking out of the window.

"I thought you were safe in England, Vevette," said David, in English. "What brings you here?"

"My own folly and wickedness," I answered. "But I cannot tell you the story now. David, if you ever loved me, go, or send to Lord Stantoun, at Stantoun Court, near Biddeford, in Devonshire. Tell him you saw me here a prisoner. Watch what they do with me, and carry him word. Tell Andrew Corbet that I have always loved him, and always shall. But how are you here in safety?"

"I am of too much use for my master to spare me, and so he gives me protection," was the reply; "but it will not be for long. But what of my father and mother—of madame? Do you know anything?"

"Maman is in heaven. Your parents are at Tre Madoc, in Cornwall, living in comfort. My lord will tell you. David, have you a little Gospel?"

He took from an inner pocket a little thin, worn book, made for concealment—the Gospel of St. Luke.

"Give it me—I have none," said I, and he put it into my hand.

"Lucille," said I.

"I know nothing of her," was the sorrowful answer. "Since she left Sartilly I have heard once that she escaped, and again that she was dead. Depend upon me, Vevette!" Then, as Susanne made a warning sign, he pressed my hand and passed on.

The convent gate was once more opened, and I was summoned to descend. I was led by a nun through a long passage, then along a cloister which bounded one side of the convent burial-place, and at last into the parlor, where sat my uncle and aunt. Behind the grating stood a lady in conventual dress, whom I judged to be the Superior. She looked like a fussy, important sort of personage, but she had a kind, motherly face. Behind her stood two other nuns, in the dress of the Ursulines.

"This is the young lady," said my uncle, presenting me to the Superior. "I trust she may be a credit to those friends who have exerted themselves to provide for her. As you have the king's letter and the other papers, reverend mother, it will not be needful for us to trespass longer on your valuable time." So saying, and without a word of leave-taking, he took my aunt's hand and led her away.

"So you are the last!" said the Superior, addressing me not unkindly. "You do not look so very strong for a colonist, I must say; but since you have the king's own letter there is nothing to be said. What think you, my sister?" turning to the elderly woman who stood behind her.

"I think his Majesty is beside himself," answered the latter, with a bluntness which somehow surprised me while it made me like her. "She looks much fitter to help Sister Therese in the schoolroom, or Sister Veronique with her embroidery, than to rough it in a new country. Have you been ill, child?"

"No, madame," I answered, "but I am weary with my journey."

"You should say reverend mother," corrected the nun not ungently. "We do not keep worldly titles and family names here, like the ladies of the Sacred Heart. We are all mothers and sisters. Would it not be well, my mother, for this child to rest for a while before joining her companions for the voyage?"

"Yes, of course; you always know best, dear sister," answered the other lady. "Let her rest, and have a good supper."

"Stay where you are, child. There, sit down, and I will come to you presently," said the mother assistant, as I found she was. I was very glad indeed to take a chair, and I remained alone for some minutes thinking over what I had heard, and puzzling myself to no purpose over the hints as to colonists and a new country which the Superior had thrown out. Before I had arrived at any conclusion the mother assistant appeared at another door from the one I had entered, and bade me follow her. She conducted me along a gallery and to a cell, small indeed but clean, and by no means uncomfortable.

"You can remain here for this night, and I will send you some supper," said she. "To-morrow you will be introduced to your companions, and to the sisters who will have charge of you all. The vessel will not sail for several days, so you will have time to get well rested." And she departed, leaving me more puzzled than ever. I found a small mail in my cell, and was glad to discover therein some changes of raiment, all very plain, and even coarse. There were also some books of devotion, a rosary, and a purse containing a small sum of money, besides a considerable package of biscuits, dried fruit, and comfits, which had evidently been thrust in after the mail was packed, probably by Susanne.

I changed my travelling-dress, bathed my face, and brushed the dust out of my hair. I would have given almost anything to open my Testament, but this I dared not do. I had hardly made myself ready when a nun entered with my supper, which was good, and arranged with neatness. There was even a cup of chocolate. The dishes were set out on my little table, and the nun, bidding me take my chocolate while it was fresh, departed and closed the door. Then indeed I did venture to draw forth my precious Gospel and read a few words—only a few—but they were like manna in the desert.

"And while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him."

That was all. It brought the whole to my mind. I was the prodigal who had left my father's house and wasted my substance, and now I was brought to the husks indeed. What could I do but to act like the poor spendthrift—arise and go to my father?

I heard a step in the gallery, and thrust my book into my bosom. The step passed, but I dared not take it out again just then; and, sitting down, I ate my supper with a good appetite.

"They mean to try what kindness can do in the first place," I mused. "I dare say the good sister thought these sugared apricots would be so many irresistible arguments. But what could she mean by what she said about colonists and a new country? All at once the explanation flashed across me with the force of certainty. I was to be sent out to Canada.

To make my meaning plain I must relate a little bit of history.

It is well known that King Louis the Fourteenth took a deep interest in his colony of New France, in America. He concerned himself personally in all its affairs, public and private, and made all sorts of laws and regulations for its benefit. He was very desirous that the colonists should lead settled lives, instead of taking to the woods and living with and like the savages, as a great many of them would have preferred, to do and in fact did, in spite of him. He would have them marry and raise large families, and promised premiums in the shape of land, provisions, and so forth, to those who did so. But where were the wives to come from? This also his Majesty provided, with the help of his ministers and of the Jesuits, who were deeply engaged in the scheme. He sent out whole ship-loads of young women under the care of certain devoted ladies and nuns, which women, on their arrival, were sorted out in different rooms, according to their quality—the peasant girls in one, the young ladies in another—and the bachelors were not only invited but required to choose wives from among their number, according to their degree. The young women themselves had no choice in the matter, except that the peasant girls were sometimes allowed to go out as servants in the families of such married people as were able to keep them, but the arrangement was not greatly approved. This commerce was not now carried on quite so briskly as had been the case several years before, but a ship-load was still dispatched now and then. The girls mostly came from public institutions or from families of peasants overburdened with children, and I suppose in general found their condition improved by the change. The young ladies or demoiselles were usually the inconvenient relations of good families whom it was desirable to get rid of. I learned afterward from the Mother Superior, who did not object to a bit of gossip, that Monsieur de Fayrolles had represented me to the king as an illegitimate daughter of his brother, for whom he wished to provide; and I suppose he had made me a kind of peace-offering to his Majesty, knowing how much his heart was engaged in this scheme. The offering was accepted, but I do not know whether or not it answered the purpose for which it was meant.

Strange to say, the thought of being thus sent out to Canada was rather a relief to my mind, after I had discovered that I was not to return to England. It was at least a respite. It gave room for something to happen. I knew that there were also English colonies in North America, and in my ignorance, thinking of that country as no larger than France or England, I conceived it might be possible to effect an escape to them. I had little notion of the vast forests and deserts, the wild beasts and wilder men which lay between New France and New England. At all events I was now in kind hands—that was something. I had contrived to send word to my English friends, for that David would do my errand I had not a doubt. I resolved to make the best of present circumstances, to use what time I could call my own in meditation on all I had learned, and if at last I made up my mind definitely that the way of my parents was the true way, to confess my faith without fear of consequences. For it must be remembered that I was still in some sense unsettled in my belief. The arguments of Father Martien would recur to my mind, and I did not always see how to answer them. Still I was struggling toward the shining light at the head of the way, as Mr. John Bunyan hath it in his quaint parable, and the light grew more clear and the ground firmer under my feet at every effort.

When the sister came after my supper-dishes she was evidently pleased to see that I had appreciated her dainties.

"You look better, child," she said kindly.

"I am better, thank you, sister," I answered. "I feel much refreshed."

"Why, that is well," said she. "The reverend mother says you need not attend the evening service, as you seem so much fatigued with your journey. She advises you to go early to rest, and to-morrow she will see and talk with you, and you shall be introduced to the holy mother who has charge of the expedition."

"When does the ship sail?" I ventured to ask, seeing I had guessed rightly.

"Some time next week, I believe, but I am not certain. I hope so, I am sure; for these girls turn the house upside down, and I must say that I don't think a marriage brokerage quite the business for nuns. But what am I saying?" and she crossed herself. "No doubt our superiors know best. My unlucky tongue is always getting me into trouble."

"Never mind," said I, seeing that she looked rather appealingly at me; "I am no tale-bearer, you may be sure. I dare say the young people are a great trouble, but I will try not to make more than I can help," I added, smiling.

"Oh, you—you are a young lady—that is plain to be seen. Where are you from?"

"From Normandy," I answered. "My foster-mother lived not very far from Granville."

"I have been there," said the nun; "I was in the hospital at Sartilly."

How I longed to ask about Lucille, but I dared not do so for fear of inconvenient questions.

"And have you ever travelled?" asked the nun, who was called, as she told me, Sister St. Stanislaus.

I replied that I had been in England, and had therefore crossed the Channel twice.

"And were you ill?"

"No, not at all," I answered.

"Mother Mary will be glad to hear that, for she is always ill the whole voyage through. She has made it two or three times. There, I must not stay any longer. I will come in the morning to lead you to the chapel, and afterward to the Superior's apartment, where you will see Mother Mary of the Incarnation.* Then good-night, child. Rest well."

I thanked the good sister, for whom I had already conceived a great regard, and she withdrew. I was glad enough to obey her recommendation and go to rest, for between fatigue and excitement I was fairly worn out. The bed, though narrow and hard, was very clean, and smelled of lavender. I read in my Gospel as long as the fading light would allow, and then, carefully concealing it, I said my prayers and lay down, feeling greatly comforted and reassured, though I should have been puzzled to account for my state of mind. Certainly, my circumstances were not promising.

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* Mother Mary of the Incarnation is a real historical personage, though I have taken a liberty with her in bringing her back to France at this time.—L. E. G.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE CONVENT.

I SLEPT till waked by the rays of the sun coming through the uncurtained window. It was yet early, but I heard people astir, so I got up. I dressed myself neatly in one of my new gowns, and put up my hair under a white kerchief. I could not but smile as I regarded myself in the little mirror contained in my étui, and thought of the contrast between my present plain woollen dress and that my aunt had been so solicitous about when I was presented to Monsieur de Luynes. I was still holding the mirror in my hand when Sister St. Stanislaus entered.

"Good-morning, my child." Then, catching sight of what I held, "A mirror? Why, I have not seen one in years. Put it away! put it away! We have no such vanities here. Or, stay!" she added wistfully; "it could not do any harm to take *one* look."

I handed her the little glass. She regarded herself long and earnestly. Then, handing it back to me, "There, put it away. I should never have known my own face. I am properly punished for my vanity. And yet I was pretty once—as pretty as you are."

"You are pretty now," said I, with truth; for her face, though irregular, and one which must have owed much to complexion, was still pleasing from its kindliness. "I loved you the moment I saw you."

"Ah, my child, you are a flatterer! Young people do usually like me, but they say it is only because I spoil them so. Well, if you are ready we will go to the chapel."

I followed the sister along the same gallery across the open court, and then into the convent church, where my companions for the voyage were already assembled. Here she placed me by the side of a pale, frightened-looking girl, younger than myself, and retired to take her place in the choir with the other sisters.

I had only time to glance at my future companions before the service began. They were evidently mostly of the peasant class, and did not as a rule look at all oppressed by their destiny, although two or three had red eyes, and one at least was the picture of despair. I was sure I had seen her before, though I could not tell where.

After the service we breakfasted together, while one of the nuns read aloud the life of some juvenile saint or other, of whom I remember no more than that she sat all day in the hen-house and wept for her sins, and gave large gifts to the poor out of the property of her worldly father and brother, who opposed her vocation.*

After breakfast my companions went to the gardens for an hour's recreation, but I was called into the private apartment of the Mother Superior. I found the good mother seated in her chair of state, attended by a nun and another lady in a semi-conventual dress, whom I found was the famous Mary of the Incarnation.

This lady was born of a family named Guyard. Married at eighteen, not very happily it seems, her husband died after two years, leaving her with a young son. But she was far too pious to concern herself with the care of her infant, so she turned it over to her sister and busied herself with all sorts of penances, meditations, and ecstasies in washing dishes, scrubbing floors, and, in short, performing all sorts of work to which she had no call, while the work which Providence had put into her hands—that of caring for her baby—was delegated to another. For a good while the love she still cherished for this child kept her from the cloister, but at last she made a profession and adhered to it, though the boy, half crazed by his loss, made his way into the refectory of the convent, and with tears and screams of anguish besought the nuns to give him back his mother. The poor young fellow went to the bad altogether afterward, and no wonder. One would not expect him to have much regard for religion.

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* I cannot now place this paragon of goodness, though she is no creation of mine. My impression is that I found her in the lives of the Franciscans.—L. E. G.

Having, however, conquered the last small remnant of natural affection which remained in her heart, she was rewarded by a wonderful vision, in which she was advertised that the Virgin called her specially to Canada.

Thither she repaired, in company with several other Ursuline nuns, and the famous Madame de Pellice, who made a mock marriage in order to carry out her devout schemes. She remained in Canada many years, and having come to France on some important business, was returning, having in charge twenty young women and two nuns.

I can see her this moment as she stood behind the Superior's chair. She was a handsome woman still, with bright eyes and a commanding presence, and, I must say, very little appearance of humility about her. I think I never saw a face and manner more expressive of spiritual pride and conscious sanctity, and this appearance did not belie her. She possessed great ability for all sorts of affairs, a keen penetration in regard to character, and withal a good deal of real kindness and charity.

I was introduced to this lady, who received me graciously and made some inquiries as to my health. Then she asked whether I had any vocation for a religious life.

"No, madame, I believe not," I answered.

"Reverend mother," corrected the Superior again.

"Cannot you remember, child, that there are no madames here?"

"I will try, reverend mother," I answered, whereat she smiled and said I was an apt scholar.

"I hope she may prove so," was the remark of Mother Mary. "Only for the king's express command, I should think twice before taking her. What do you know how to do, child? Anything besides dressing and dancing and painting fans?"

"Yes, madame—reverend mother, I should say," I answered; "I can sew, spin and knit, make lace and embroider, and I know something of ordering a household."

"Why, you will be quite a treasure for some one," said Mother Mary. "Can you sing?"

"Yes, mother."

"You might be very useful in our house if you only had a vocation," said Mother Mary. "Perhaps you may find one yet. However, there is time enough to think about that. Meantime you shall instruct some of your companions in the art of knitting hose, which art may be very useful to them. Or is that too humble an employment for a young lady like you?"

"No, my mother; I shall gladly do that or anything else whereby I may be useful to my companions," I answered. "I would rather be busy than not."

"That is well," said Mother Mary, relaxing a little, and evidently regarding me with more favor. "I wish all were like you, but I would in general rather have charge of twenty peasant girls than of one demoiselle. I dare say you will do nicely, child. I think I know the match that will just suit you."

"There will be two words to that bargain," I thought, but I said nothing.

Mother Mary then commended the simplicity of my dress, and a bell ringing she took me by the hand and led me to the school-room, where the young people were now all assembled. She placed me by the side of the same pale girl, whom she presented to me as Mademoiselle de Troyon, and saying that she would send me some knitting-needles and thread she left us together. The other girls were busy, under the superintendence of the nuns, in making garments for themselves, and sad work they made of it, being more used to out-door than to in-door work. I believe, however, that a great deal of their bungling was sheer mischief, and I wondered at the patience of the nuns.

The requisite tools being produced, I set seriously to work to teach the stitch to my companion, and she took so much pains in learning that at the end of the lesson she could do a row very neatly. We were placed near a window, apart from the others, and Mother Mary told us we might converse in low tones. Of course, like other young persons, we soon became acquainted. I found that her name was Desirée, that she was an orphan, and had always lived in a convent till very lately. She had a strong vocation, and wished to be allowed to take the veil instead of marrying, and she regarded with horror the prospect of being united to a stranger and living in a wild place, surrounded by forests full of wolves.

"But why do you not take the veil, since you wish it so much?" I asked.

"Because the king wishes two or three officers to marry and settle, and you and I are the only demoiselles who could be found to go out," was the answer. "But it does not matter," she added, with a kind of quiet resolution; "I know that I shall never live to see Canada."

"Dear Desirée, you should not be downcast," I said. "Things may turn out better than you think. Do not give up life for a bad business?"

She smiled sadly and shook her head, but said no more on the subject. We had a good dinner served to us by and by, and then two hours more of recreation in the garden, overlooked by the nuns who had us in charge. I was walking up and down an alley by myself when I met Sister St. Stanislaus, who joined me, and we walked together.

"So you have been in England," said she. "Can you speak English?"

I told her I could.

"I knew a girl who could speak English once," said she. "It was when I was at Sartilly, as I told you. Poor Lucille! she came to a sad end."

"What happened to her?" I asked, with a beating heart.

"Oh, I don't know whether I should tell the story, though to be sure it may be a warning," said the sister, divided between her discretion and the dear delight of telling a tale. "You see she was one of those unfortunate Reformed, to begin with, and she could not conquer her natural affection for her relations; She had a lover also, it seems, and she slipped out of the gate one day to speak to him, and was seen to give him a packet. Well, of course, being a postulant under instruction, that brought upon her great disgrace and many penances. If I had been to decide, I should have said they took just the way to make her regret her lover all the more. However, she was forgiven at last and taken into favor again, but it was not long before she got into some new trouble by a hasty answer. I must say she had a trying temper, always looking out for affronts. After that she grew very odd and silent. I was mistress of the novices at that time, and I tried hard to win her confidence, but in vain. At last, oh, poor thing! she was missing, and we found a part of her clothing hanging on a bush some way down the river, which was very high at the time. Either she drowned herself or fell in and was unable to get out. I hope the latter, for I was fond of her, though she made me a good deal of trouble. I have never ceased to pray for her soul," said the good sister, wiping her eyes, which had overflowed plentifully. "If she is beyond the reach of prayers they may benefit some other poor soul in purgatory. There, now, I have made you cry too. What a tender heart you have! Let it be a warning to you, my child."

I wondered what the story was meant to warn me from, but I said nothing, and we began to talk of other things till the sister left me, and then I had my cry out. Poor Lucille! So this was the end. And she had actually fallen into disgrace for trying to warn my parents of their danger! It was very sad, and yet somehow I felt comforted about her, I could not tell why. I was just recovering my composure when I met Mother Superior and Mother Mary of the Incarnation walking together. The latter seemed to be laying down the law in rather an authoritative style, I thought, to which the Superior listened with some apparent impatience, and at last broke out with,

"No doubt, sister, you may be right. I dare say you know how to rule your own house to perfection. I am sure if I were visiting you I should never think for a moment of advising you upon the management of your family."

Mother Mary was not so dead to worldly affection but that she reddened visibly at this significant speech. She made no reply to the Superior, but turned sharply upon me.

"What are you doing here by yourself, child? Crying, I see. That is very wrong. Understand, once for all, that you are not to separate yourself in this way from your companions. You are not so very much better than they. Let me see no more of it!"

"I have not been alone till this very moment, reverend mother," I answered, in a tone which I meant to be very humble. "I have been walking with Sister St Stanislaus, who was telling me an affecting story. But—I fear I am very ignorant, reverend mother—I thought from the history the sister read us this morning that solitude and tears were among the most blessed things to the soul. I was so much interested in hearing how that holy young lady sat in the hen-house and cried all day by herself."

The mother looked fairly posed, as if she did not know what to answer. I went on, prompted by that spirit of mischief which never quite deserted me in the greatest straits.

"And that other place was so interesting, too, about her taking her father's goods unknown to him to give to the poor. Such a blessed example! I shall hope to follow it when I have a household of my own."

I saw by the smile which the Mother Superior turned away to hide that she saw through me, and I fancied also that she was not displeased. Mother Mary was spared the necessity of a reply which might have puzzled her, by the ringing of the dinner-bell. I enjoyed my triumph for a few minutes, as I meekly followed the elder ladies toward the house, and then I reflected that I had done a foolish thing in setting against me this lady, who had me so entirely in her power. However, she had her revenge, and really I don't think she liked me the worse for our little encounter. I am sure the Superior did not. When we were seated at the table, and the nun had begun to read according to custom, Mother Mary stopped her.

"You seem to be rather hoarse, sister," said she, though I had not noticed it. "Mademoiselle d'Antin is a good reader, and she has a special devotion for the lives of the saints. Mademoiselle, you will take the sister's place and read to us."

Of course there was nothing for it but to obey, and I took care to show no unwillingness for my task. I read my very best, and as the story to-day happened to be a really interesting one, I had the satisfaction of seeing more than one of my auditors forget her dinner for a moment or two to listen.

"That is well," said Mother Mary, when I had finished. "We shall have the pleasure of hearing you again some time. Now eat your dinner."

The milk porridge was rather cold, but I was not troubled at that, and the sister whose place I had taken presently brought me a nice little omelette, which she had procured I know not how. Mother Mary never showed any ill-will to me afterward. She had a sort of magnanimity about her which made her rule endurable. I was often called on to read, but I believe it was only because she liked to hear me better than poor Sister Joanne, who droned on like a drumbledrone under a hat, as we say in these parts. Sister Joanne was not sorry to get rid of her task, and my meals fared none the worse for that.

We went on in this same routine for several days. Mother Mary kept a tight rein over her own flock, but I thought from what I observed that the nuns had comfortable times under their good-natured Superior. They went through all their services and observed their hours for silence and the rest, but it was all done in an easy, perfunctory manner, so to speak. Their garden and orchard were beautiful, and they made great quantities of dried and sugared fruits, and distilled essences and cordials by the gallon from the sweet flowers and aromatic herbs which grow so plentifully in that part of France. I never saw in England such lavender and rosemary as grows wild there. I quite won the heart of Sister St. Anne by giving her the true English recipe for distilling lavender and making the Queen of Hungary's water. I grew attached to the good nuns, who were all very kind to me. My knitting lessons were extended to some of their number, and even to the Superior herself, who asked Mother Mary to allow me to teach her, saying that it was a kind of work that would just suit her. Mother Mary gave the desired permission, adding that her sister was happy in having time for such employments. As for herself, she never had a moment to sit down to her needle from morning till night.

"Yes; but you see, dear sister, we are so differently situated," answered Mother Superior meekly. "Our house works so quietly and easily. You see we have no sisters but such as are of good family. We are not obliged to take up with any riff-raff the king may choose to send us, as you are over there."

I can't say I found the Superior a very apt scholar.

I never succeeded in teaching her how to turn off a heel, and at last in despair I suggested that she should knit a rug for the cat, which was a great personage and much petted, though she had no vocation whatever. The rug went off better, but I rather doubt whether puss has had the benefit of it to this day.

On the whole I was not unhappy during the two weeks I remained at the Ursuline convent at Marseilles. I did my best to please Mother Mary, and succeeded pretty well. I think she appreciated my efforts, for really most of the other girls were trials—idle, mischievous, and bending all their efforts not to learn the arts the nuns tried to teach them. I except Desirée, who was always docile, and the poor girl whom I had thought I knew. I got into conversation with her one day over our work, and at last she told me she had seen me before.

"Do you not remember stopping in your travelling carriage to speak to my aunt, the day after our vineyard was destroyed? The lady with you gave my aunt some money."

"Yes, I remember well," I answered. "What became of your father?"

"He was not my father, but my mother's step-brother," was the answer. "He had adopted me, and I was betrothed to his son. My lord the marquis shot him dead with his own hand. My betrothed was arrested on some pretext of poaching, and sent to the galleys, and I, because I would no' give him up and go into service in the Marquist family, was sent here. It does not matter. Baptiste is dead, and I would as soon be here as anywhere—rather a thousand times than in the house of that wretch! I cannot be worse off. Maybe they will let me live out as a servant."

This is a fair specimen of what may be done by a tyrannical landowner in France. By all I hear, things must have grown worse instead of better. It is a wonder if they do not have an explosion some day which will blow them all sky-high.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VOYAGE.

THE day at last came for our embarkation. Our luggage was taken away in the first place, but we were allowed to keep each a basket containing a change of linen and certain other necessaries. Mother St. Stanislaus distributed among us with a lavish hand biscuits, dried fruit, gingerbread, and peppermint comfits, and the good Sister St. Anne smuggled into my own basket a bottle of lavender and a flask of a certain fragrant and spicy cordial which she had a great reputation for making, and which was esteemed a sovereign remedy for indigestion. There was a good deal of indigestion among the nuns of St. Ursula. Poor dear souls! they were all very good to me, and but for the change in my religious views and the hope I still cherished of meeting Andrew once more, I think I could have made myself very content among them. The mothers kissed me and made me various little presents, some of which I have still, especially a medal containing some hairs of St. Ursula, given me by the Superior. They are coarse hairs, and are just the color of the tail of my chestnut mare. I think she sincerely regretted my departure, but I don't think she was at all sorry to get rid of Mother Mary, who was a religious all through, taking a real delight in all sorts of mortifications, and very ready to impose them on others; besides that, she could not for the life of her help wishing to take the management of matters into her own hands, wherever she was. I know she ached to reform the Ursuline Convent from top to bottom, and it was well for the comfort of those concerned that she had not the power to do so.

We were taken in close carriages from the convent through the city to the place of embarkation. The ship could not be brought alongside the wharf, and we had to embark a few at a time in the little boats. Mother Mary, who had managed several such affairs, sent her two assistant nuns first to receive the passengers as they came, and herself remained on the wharf till the whole company were dispatched. Desirée and I were among the last. I was burning with impatience, for I saw David in the crowd and close to me, and I longed to slip into his hand a note I had written telling him of the fate of poor Lucille, and begging him to lose no time in escaping to England. At last the chance came. Poor Louisonne, who was always doing the wrong thing at the wrong time, did the right one for me and slipped into the water. The bustle and alarm—for the poor thing was nearly drowned—drew Mother Mary away for a moment and gave me the desired opportunity. David drew near, and as he brushed by me I put the note into his hand. Nobody saw me but a good-natured-looking Franciscan, who only smiled and shook his head at me.

At last we were all on board and introduced to the cabin, which was to be our lodging for at least six weeks. Oh, what a hole it was!—dirty, ill-lighted, not half furnished. Mother Mary was very angry, as I could see by her face; and indeed I heard her remonstrating with the captain very energetically on the subject; but he only shrugged his shoulders and said it was not his fault. He had taken command of the ship only a few days before, and that not by any good-will of his own. He added, however, that now he was appointed to the command he meant to exercise it, and intimated to Mother Mary very plainly that she had better mind her own business. She certainly had enough to mind. Half the girls were crying or in hysterics; everything was in confusion. We were dreadfully in the way on deck, but no one could bear the idea of going below. Mother Mary at last restored some sort of quiet, and calling me to help her, with the remark that I seemed to have some spirit and sense, we began to try to put our cabin into better order. It was discouraging work, for everything was wanting for comfort or decency; but we worked hard, and by night we had things in better trim. The girls had had their cry out and felt for the time in good spirits. We did not set sail till about six in the evening, being kept by the state of the tide, but at last we were off. The land gradually faded from view ; we lost sight of the lights in the city, and before bed-time we were out in the open sea, and every soul but myself was overcome with the first depressing feelings of sea-sickness. I had a busy time enough for the next week. Every passenger was sick, including Mother Mary herself, who was one of the worst, though she strove against the weakness with all the force of her strong will. But, in truth, a strong will does little for one when one's heels are one moment higher than one's head, and the next knocked violently on the floor, and every portable article is sliding about trying its best to break everything else.

We had a stormy voyage from the first, though the winds were for the most part favorable, and the passage promised to be short. But it was wretchedly uncomfortable. The ship was ill-found and hardly seaworthy. She was crammed with goods, which were thrust even into our cabin, thus abridging the small room allotted to us. The water was bad, and the sailors stole our wine ; our provisions were not fit for well people, not to say invalids, and short as our passage was we had more than one case of scurvy. Poor Desirée succumbed under her hardships and died when we had been out about three weeks. I had become greatly attached to her, but I could not weep for her death. It seemed a merciful deliverance.

For myself, I was not as unhappy as I should have been if I had not been so busy. The only really well person of the party, I had enough to do in waiting on the sick. I had made friends with the cook, a great good-natured blackamoor, by speaking to him in English, when I found that he understood that language, and I cooked our miserable provisions so as to make them as savory as possible, and now and then secured a bit of something better than usual to tempt the appetite of poor Sister Margaret, who seemed likely enough to die of exhaustion. Going about as I did, I was often free to take out my little book and study its contents. The more I did so, the more I recalled what I had learned of the other Scriptures, the more I wondered how I could ever have so far departed from the simplicity of the Gospel as to profess the Roman Catholic religion. I never should have done so but for the fact that my belief in all religion had been weakened by intercourse with unbelievers, and my heart corrupted by love of pleasure and of the world. I do not say by any means that this is true of all perverts, but I know it was true of me.

But now arose a grave question, which indeed had troubled me before. I felt that I must confess my faith before men; I could not go on serving God according to the faith of my fathers and worshipping the saints at the same time. I could not believe in and apply to the One Mediator, and at the same time invoke a hundred others. It may be easy for any one who reads these lines, and who has never been in any danger, to say what my conduct should have been. But for me, in the midst of the conflict, it was not so easy. I well knew what would be my fate, for the Jesuits ruled in Canada, and that with a rod of iron, and I had seen enough of Mother Mary to guess well that she would have no compassion for a heretic. I thought and prayed and wept, and at last strength seemed to come to me. I had nothing to do just now but to wait on my companions. When the time came for help I should have help. Sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof.

Help did come, and, as so often happens, through trouble. We had been out five weeks when we were overtaken by a tempest, compared to which all we had suffered before was as a summer breeze. I do not know enough of nautical matters to describe it. I know that for many days neither sun nor stars appeared ; that we were tossed up to the skies and then hurled down to the abyss ; that we lost sail and masts and were more than once in imminent danger of sinking ; and that when the storm subsided at last we drifted in helpless wreck, having lost all our boats, and having our ship so injured that the least increase in the storm might send her to the bottom. The captain, who had behaved like a hero, was busy in overseeing the construction of rafts. He had ordered us all on deck, sick and well together, in order to give us a last chance, though a slender one. We sat huddled together, some praying, some crying, others too miserable to do either —silent, in hopeless despair. Such was our condition when, happening to look up, I was the very first to descry a sail, and almost at the same moment the shout was raised by half a dozen at once. It was a British ship, and a large one. She was rapidly coming up with us, and our despair was changed into the certainty of succor.

It was a work of some danger to transfer so many helpless women from one ship to the other, but it was accomplished at last, the captain and Mother Mary being the last to leave the poor wreck. Nobody but myself understood English, and I was called upon to interpret. The ship was the Good Hope, trading from Bristol to New England, and now on her way to the town of Boston, from which, according to the reckoning of Captain Mayhew, we were but a short day's sail.

Mother Mary was quite in despair. She offered large rewards to the captain to alter his course and sail for the St. Lawrence, but in vain. The captain said his ship had been damaged, and was in no state for such a voyage ; that he was overdue at Boston, and that his wife would be anxious about him. He would engage that Mother Mary and her companions should meet with every civility and accommodation, but to the St. Lawrence he could not and would not go—" and that was all about it." There was no opportunity to argue the matter further, for poor Mother Mary was taken very ill once more and had to be carried to the cabin which the sailors had hastily arranged for us. The captain apologized for its narrowness, saying that he had another small cabin which should be ours so soon as its occupant, a gentleman passenger who had been hurt in the storm, should give it up, adding, however, that he hoped to set us all on dry ground before that time to-morrow.

From the moment that I set foot on the deck of the Good Hope my mind was made up. I would tell the captain my story, throw myself on his mercy, and entreat him to rescue me. If he refused to do so I would contrive to effect my escape while we were in Boston. Surely in a town full of Protestants there must be some one who would protect me.

I had very little rest that night, though Mother Mary herself, the sickest of the party, scolded the others for their demands on me, and at last bade me lie down and not mind them. At daylight most of my charges were asleep, and I stole on deck to compose myself and breathe a little fresh air. Lo! there before me lay the land, green and fair, clothed with forest for the most part, but with here and there a clearing. How heavenly it all looked, but I had no time for gazing. There stood the captain, as I thought, with his back to me, looking toward the land. There was no time like the present, and I went quickly up to him.

"Captain Mayhew!" said I.

The stranger turned, and I saw Andrew Corbet. He looked at me with a bewildered, half-recognizing gaze, and the thought darted into my mind that he did not mean to know me. But it was no time for scruples or maiden shyness. The need was too imminent.

"Andrew!" said I; "if ever you loved me or my mother, save me!"

"Vevette!" said Andrew, still wondering. "It *is* Vevette." Then catching me in his arms he left me no doubt of the state of his heart. He never asked me whether I still loved him, and I don't think it ever occurred to him to doubt it.

"Wall!" said a voice close by; "I should say, Mr. Corbet, that you had found some one you was kind of glad to see."

"Glad is no word," said Andrew, while I released myself, covered with blushes. "But how came you here?"

In a very few words I told him of what had happened. Andrew's brow grew dark, and Captain Mayhew expressed the wish that he had that Frenchman on board.

"Will you not contrive to seve me?" I said, in conclusion. "I am a Protestant—as much as I ever was. I cannot go to Canada. I only ask a safe asylum. They said I was a French subject because my father was French."

"Darn the French!" said Captain Mayhew. "There, I won't swear. Yes, we'll save you somehow. Never fear. But how?"

He considered a moment, and then his thin, clever face broke into a smile, and he turned to Andrew,

"You say this young lady was promised to you, with the consent of her parents?"

"Yes," answered Andrew. "We might have been married before this but for my own hardness and pig-headed jealousies."

"You were not to blame," said I. "The fault has been all mine."

"Reckon you'll have time to settle that," said the captain. "Well, since all that is so, and you like the young lady and she likes you, why, it appears to me that the best way will be to call the good minister who came over with us, and let him marry you on the spot. Then the lady will be the wife of a British subject, which will make her one herself, I take it; and if old King Lewy don't like it, let him come over himself and see about it."

"It would be much the best way, Vevette," said Andrew, turning to me. "It would give me the right to protect you."

I faltered something, I know not what.

"The long and the short of it is, we will have a wedding on the spot," said the captain. "As to the banns and all that, we can settle it afterward. But we had better be in a hurry, for we are getting into smooth water, and your Mother Mary will be astir presently, making a fuss. Just call Mr. Norton, and tell him to make haste, will you?" he said to the steward. "Or, maybe we had better go into my cabin. Mr. Norton is a regular Church of England minister," he explained to me as he assisted me down the companion-way. "He's going out to see his folks, but he don't calculate to settle." A few words put Mr. Norton in possession of the story. The first mate was called in as an additional witness, and in half an hour I returned to the cabin the lawful wife of Andrew Corbet of Tre Madoc.

I had not been away an hour, but how the world was changed to me!"

"Where have you been, and what kept you so long?" asked Mother Mary as I brought her some coffee which the steward had provided.

"I have been on deck for air, and the captain kept me to answer some questions," I answered; and then, to hide my confusion, I added, "We are in full sight of land, reverend mother. The captain says we shall be at Boston by afternoon."

"Oh that it were Quebec instead of that heretical Boston!" sighed Mother Mary. "Is the captain quite obdurate still?"

"Yes, reverend mother; but he says he is sure we shall receive every kindness from the people. Will you try to get up? The ship does not roll much now."

I assisted her, and my companions, who were overjoyed when they heard we were in sight of land, though it was a land of heretics. A land of cannibals would have been welcome to the poor souls just then. We were soon all on deck, I keeping by Mother Mary's side as usual, for it had been settled that I should say nothing till the time came for disembarkation.

It came very soon. The anchor rattled down into Boston harbor about three o'clock. We were at once boarded by the harbor-master and another gentleman of goodly presence, who, it seems, was a magistrate. He looked with surprise at the unusual passengers, and Captain Mayhew explained to them the state of the case. The gentleman, who could speak French fluently, turned to Mother Mary, and with much politeness assured her of every consideration. There was a French ship in the bay, which would doubtless take her and her companions to their destination. Meantime a house on shore should be placed at her disposal and furnished with every comfort.

Madame, hearing of the French ship, declined to go on shore, saying that she should prefer going at once to the ship, whereat three or four of the girls burst out crying with disappointment. Mr. Folsom suggested that the ship would not be prepared for our reception, and that at least they must give the captain notice; but Mother Mary was obstinate. She would remain where she was rather than set foot on heretic ground. This, however, was shown to be impossible, and at last she consented to go on shore, provided she could have a house to herself, which Mr. Folsom promised. Then, turning to Andrew, he asked if he were ready to accompany him.

"I am quite ready if my wife is," replied Andrew, and at a signal from him I left Mother Mary's side and went to him, placing my arm within his. There was an exclamation of horror from the nuns.

"Vevette, what does this mean?" exclaimed Mother Mary. "Wicked, shameless girl, what are you doing?"

"Good words, madame," said Andrew in French. "This lady was long ago betrothed to me by the consent of all our parents. We have been separated a long time by the force of circumstances; but having come together again we resolved to put it out of any human power to separate us, and so we were married this morning by the Reverend Mr. Norton, a Church of England minister, who is on board, as Captain Mayhew can certify."

The captain bowed. "Oh, yes, he is a regular minister," said he. "I know him and all his folks. It is all right, Mr. Folsom. Tell the lady so."

The lady was told so, but she refused to listen. With her most majestic air she commanded me to return to her side.

"No, madame," I answered; "I thank you for all your kindness, but my place is with my husband."

"Wretched, deluded child! Know you not that a marriage by a heretic minister is no marriage, and is in itself a crime?"

"In France, madame, no doubt; but we are not in France. This is an English colony, and governed by English laws."

"But a heretic," said Mother Mary; "a blasphemer of our holy religion!"

"A heretic according to your thinking, but no blasphemer, madame," said Andrew. "My wife is herself a Protestant, as her fathers have been before her."

"It is true," said I; "I have been deluded for a time; but I have seen my error. I am of the Reformed, heart and soul; or rather," remembering our old family boast, "I am a Waldensian—of that people who never corrupted the faith, and so needed no reformation."

"And all this time you have been pretending to be a good Catholic," said Mother Mary. "What a wolf in sheep's clothing have I been entertaining among my lambs!"

"No, madame," I answered; "I confess that my judgment was warped for a time by passion and self-interest, and the stress of a great disappointment, and in that frame I made a profession of your religion. But it is long since my faith began to waver, and since I have been on shipboard it hath been confirmed in the old way by thought, prayer, and study of the Word of God. I was no willing emigrant, but was betrayed into my present position by the treachery of those who professed, for motives of gain, to be my friends. I think it neither wrong nor shame to leave that position for the protection of the man to whom my father himself gave me."

Mother Mary was about to reply, when, glancing around, she saw all the girls listening with open mouth and exchanging significant glances with one another. So she cut the matter short.

"It is well," said she; "I wash my hands of you. Child of wicked parents, you have followed in their steps! Go, then, with your paramour, and remember that the vengeance of Heaven dogs your steps! As to me and mine, we will not set foot on this wicked shore. I demand to be taken to the

French ship immediately, without a moment's delay."

"Madame," said Andrew, bowing, "I trust I shall not forget that I am a gentleman, and that I am speaking to a woman who has been kind to my wife, and who is old enough to be my mother." I saw Mother Mary wince a little at this. "Come, Vevette, Mr. Folsom's boat waits for us."

I would have taken a kind leave of my companions, but Mother Mary would not allow it, fearing, I suppose, that marriage might be catching. We descended into Mr. Folsom's boat, and were soon at the shore. We walked up through the green lane—oh, how delicious seemed the firm ground and the grass to my feet!—till we came to Mr. Folsom's house, which was not the rude erection I expected to see, but a handsome square mansion, partly of stone, and with a pretty garden beside it. I am told that Boston hath grown to be quite a fine city. It was even then a pretty town, with neat houses and some good shops and a very decent church, which they called a meeting-house, for the most part. For they say that the name church belongs to the faithful who assemble there, and not to the place. 'Tis a matter of small moment—just one of those inconsequent things which people hold to with the most persistence. In my grandmother's time Archbishop Laud would have deposed a worthy minister because he did not believe in St. George. However, I shall never get to Mr. Folsom's house at this rate.

Mistress Folsom came to the door to meet us, having been advertised by a special messenger. She was a comely lady, richly but plainly dressed in a somewhat bygone fashion. Her two pretty daughters stood behind her, as sweet and prim as two pink daisies. She made me welcome with a motherly kiss, and listened with great amaze and interest while my husband made her acquainted with the outline of our history.

"'Tis like something in a romance," said she. "But you must be very weary, and hungry too. We will have supper ready directly. Sweetheart, would you not like to change your dress?"

I explained to her that I had no changes, all my luggage having been lost in the wreck, except my basket, which Sister St. Stanislaus had given me, and which I had clung to through all. Without more ado she carried me to a plain but pretty and comfortable chamber, and sent her two daughters hither and thither for clean linen, a gown, and other necessaries. Then they left me to myself; but presently a black wench came up with a great can of hot water and an armful of towels. I do not remember in my life any bodily sensation more delicious than that clean, well-laundered linen.

When I was dressed I took up a Bible which lay upon my toilette-table and read the one hundred and third Psalm, and then said my prayers, and having thus a little composed myself I went down stairs. A most bountiful supper was provided for us, and we sat down, waited upon by a black servant. I had no notion of so much style and ceremony in this remote corner of the world; but I soon found that there were other colonists who kept up much more state than Mr. and Mrs. Folsom. After supper Andrew and I were left to ourselves in the parlor, and it may be guessed we did not want subjects for talk. I told him my whole story, concealing nothing.

"You see what sort of wife you have taken in your haste," said I, in conclusion. "All these things are much worse than aiding and abetting poor Betty, even if I had done so, which I never did."

"Ah, Vevette! don't taunt me with my folly and obstinacy," said Andrew, covering his face. "It was just that which threw you into the hands of your enemies."

"My enemies would have had no power if I had but kept them at arm's length," said I. "It was not your fault that I did not accept Theo's invitation instead of going with Madame de Fayrolles; but the truth was that, when I heard you were going to be married to the Jamaica lady, I thought only of getting out of England before you came into it."

"So it was that piece of folly that drove you away," said Andrew. "I wish you could see the Jamaica lady, Vevette. She was indeed very kind to me when I lay ill at her father's house; but she is fifty years old at least, and about as handsome as old Deborah. Dear soul! she gave me a string of beautiful pearls for you, and when I heard you were married I threw them into the sea."

"That was very wasteful; you might have given them to the poor," I returned. "But who told you I was married?"

"Nobody said you were actually married; but when I went to Stantoun Court, to obtain news of you on my return, I found my lord fuming over a letter he had just received, saying that you were to be married on the morrow to some Frenchman—I don't remember his name—of great wealth and consequence."

"Monsieur de Luynes," said I. "They did try to make me marry him afterward, but I had not heard of him at that time. He was a good old man, and very kind to me."

"That was the name," continued Andrew. "My lord swore you should not touch a penny till you were twenty-one, whatever happened. But how came you to write yourself that you were going to be married?"

"I did not," I answered.

"It was a forgery then. There was a note in your handwriting, and signed with your name. I thought the hand looked a little Frenchified, but the signature was yours to a hair. Only for that I should have gone to Paris to find you; but I thought if you were well married, and with your own consent, I would not be a makebate between you and your husband. So I even turned the old place over to Margaret and her husband to care for, gathered together my prize-money, and what else I could, and came hither intending to turn settler. I was knocked down and hurt in the storm, which was the reason I did not see you upon your coming aboard. I was thinking on you when you came and spoke to me, and for a moment I thought it was your ghost."

"Ghosts don't come at that time of day," said I. "And so Margaret is married?"

"Yes, and well married as I could desire—to Mr. Trevathy, son of our good old knight. 'Tis an excellent marriage in every way."

"And your mother?"

"My mother lives with Margaret, and so does Rosamond for the present. Betty and her husband are in London, where he had some small office."

Our conversation was interrupted by the return of Mr. Folsom.

"And do you know what has kept me abroad so late?" said he, seeming much amused. "Even taking order for the accommodation of your French madame and her flock of lambs. I have them all safely and comfortably housed in the new tavern, and have sent for a French woman who can speak English to interpret for them."

"What! did she come on shore after all?" I asked.

"She had no choice. The captain of the French ship positively refused to receive her till his ship should be made ready for sea. So, as she could not well sleep in an open boat, she was at length prevailed upon to hear reason. I have been half over the town gathering beds and other needful comforts for them, and I have left the poor things at last happy over a hot supper."

"I am glad they are comfortable. They have had a hard time of it. I don't know how they will bear to go to sea again."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE next day I went with Mrs. Folsom to carry some additional comforts, in the shape of linen and so on, to my old companions. I found them all comfortably housed in a new tavern, which, though not quite finished, was clean and cheerful. Mother Mary would not see us at all, but Sister Margaret came to us, and was very grateful for what we brought.

"Every one has been very good," said she. "I did not know that heretics could be so kind. They used to tell us that the English settlers murdered every Catholic, and especially every nun that fell into their hands; but the people here have treated us like true Christians. They have even sent us an interpreter. They say the French vessel will set sail in about a week. Oh, Vevette, how we shall miss you!"

"Dear sister, I wish I could help take care of you; but you know it is impossible," I said.

"Yes, I know; but—" in a frightened whisper. "Ah, Vevette, take good care of yourself. The mother says the French king will have you back if he goes to war for you."

"I am not alarmed," I answered. "The French king has his hands too full to care or concern himself for such an insignificant person as I am. But who is that?" I added, starting as a plainly dressed woman looked into the room and withdrew again.

"That is our interpreter," answered Sister Margaret. "She is a heretic—more is the pity—but she is very good and useful."

"I beseech you, sister, make some excuse to call her hither," said I, all of a tremble. "I am sure I know her."

The sister called her, and held her a moment in some conversation while I looked at her. No, I was not mistaken.

"Lucille!" said I.

She turned, looked at me a moment with wide eyes of wonder, and then dropped in a dead faint at my feet. I had her in my arms in a moment.

"It is my foster-sister," said I to Mrs. Folsom. I thought she was dead."

I almost thought so again before we brought her to; but she revived at last, and knew me. Poor thing, she was sadly changed. Her black hair was quite gray, and her face looked fifty years old. She went home with us, and after a while was composed enough to tell us her story. She said she had become horribly sick of the convent life, and having fallen into disgrace with her Superior she determined to make her escape. For this purpose she feigned stupidity almost to idiocy, and having thus thrown her watchers off their guard she made her escape; putting on some clothes she found thrown aside, and disposing of her own garments in the way they were found. She had made her way by one means and another to Dieppe, where she fell in with a captain's wife, who was in sore straits for want of a servant. With her she took service, and came to the new settlements, where she had lived ever since. With what joy she received the news of her parents' welfare I leave to be guessed.

I have little more to tell in order to complete this long history. Mother Mary took her departure after a fortnight's delay, during which she received a great deal of kindness from the good people, and had more than one sharp theological duel. She did not, however, carry away all her flock. Louisonne and two other girls were missing at the hour of departure, and could nowhere be found, and she was forced to embark without them. The next day they crept out of their concealment, a good deal scared and ashamed. They were received with kindness, however, and taken to service in decent families, and all three turned out very well.

The next ship to England carried news of us to our friends, but we ourselves remained in New England. Andrew had a mind to see the country now he had come thither, and he thought, moreover, that it would be as safe for me to remain at a good distance till the storm, if storm there were, should blow over. The tale could not fail to reach the ears of King Louis and his ministers, and as our own King Charles was (I say it to our shame) absolutely under his thumb, we knew not what demands might be made. So after travelling about a while we bought a house and farm not very far from Hampton. Here we lived for six years, very happy and content; and here one day I had a great fright.

Sitting in my parlor with my youngest babe in my arms, Lucille, who made it her home with us, came in to tell me that three or four Indians were asking for food. This was no uncommon occurrence, and I bade her supply their wants and set them down to eat; but seeing that she was disturbed (for she had never overcome her fear of the natives) I went to attend to them myself. I have a tolerably quick eye and a quick ear for languages, and I discovered at once that these were none of our ordinary peaceable Neponsets, with whom we were on the best of terms, but strangers. Moreover, I was sure that one of them was a white man. I supplied them with food, and then, slipping into the next room, where I could see all their faces in a mirror without being myself seen, I saw the supposed white man make the sign of the cross, and in the action I recognized my old confessor, Father Martien.

My blood ran cold for a moment. It was well known that the Jesuits of Canada constantly set on their Indian allies to rob, burn, and murder all along our settlements; but it was seldom that they came as far as our place. No doubt these were spies sent out to see the nakedness of the land. Woe to me if I fell into their hands.

I stepped to the door and sent a black boy for my husband, who was not far away. He came, and I told him my convictions.

"Tut!" said he; "I dare say they are harmless enough."

"Look and listen for yourself," said I.

He did so, and was obliged to confess that there was cause for my alarm. They finished their meal, and went away peaceably enough, but I shall never forget the look Father Martien bestowed on me in parting. They were no sooner gone than my husband sent to rouse the neighbors, and the little settlement was put into a state of defence, and we kept a strict watch, which was all we could do that night. The next morning scouts were sent out, and it was found that quite a large war party had been in the neighborhood, but had decamped, probably in consequence of seeing us so well prepared for them. I have heard nothing of Father Martien since, though I am sure I had a glimpse of him once in London.

We remained in New England for six years, and then returned to Cornwall. My husband's mother was growing infirm, and longed to see her son and his children. Mr. Treverthy's brother was dead, and it became needful for him to live upon his own estate. So we sold our farm for a good price, and went back to our old home, a sober married couple with three promising children. My aunt Amy received me with open arms, and I never had any trouble with her, save to keep her from quite spoiling my children's tempers with indulgence and their digestion with gingerbread. We had the happiness of restoring Lucille to her parents, who received her like one returned from the grave. David had already settled in Penzance as a carpenter, and taken a modest Cornish maid to wife. He is an old man now, quite rich, and a person of great importance in the town ; but wealth has not spoiled him in the least. Lucille hath never married, and still lives with me, a most valued helper and friend. Jeanne and Simon survived to a good old age.

Of poor Betty, as I can say no good I will say nothing. My uncle Charles married a rich old woman from the city—a widow—who has led him a sad life, and seems likely to outlive him after all. I saw her once, and thought if there were anything in the doctrine of penance her husband was in a fair way to expiate all his offences. Her name was Felicia, but the felicity was all in the name. She would neither be happy herself nor let any one else be so, if she could help it.

I never saw Monsieur de Fayrolles again. He perished in a duel, under very disgraceful circumstances, some years after I left him, and there was no one remaining to bear that dishonored name. His wife, after leading a very gay life for a time, suddenly turned devotee, retired to a convent, and gave all her jewels to the shrine of Our Lady of something or other—whatever image was most in fashion at the time. I suppose the pearl necklace my lady gave me was among them. Susanne came to London, set up as a milliner and hair-dresser, and did very well. I never forgot her kindness to me, and was glad to be able to return it.

Lord and Lady Stantoun lived to a good old age. Lewis caused them a good deal of uneasiness for a time by running rather wild, and absolutely refusing to marry in his father's life-time. I believe my lord would have been very glad if his son had married his ward when he wished it—not that I ever wanted him. However, Lewis did take a wife at last, and that a wife of the Religion—a pretty, gentle, scared little Provençale—who I fear he will not keep very long. Theo and her husband have had little trouble except that she has no children. She is a blessing to every one who comes in contact with her, as Mrs. Barnard is the reverse. Margaret hath at this moment twenty children and grandchildren, and is as proud of the last as if it had been the first. Rosamond divides her time among us, happy and making happy wherever she goes.

And now I bring this long memoir of my young days to a close. I have written it at the instance of my husband and for the benefit of my children, in accordance with a kind of custom which hath obtained in our family for several generations. As to the moral, if any be needed, it may be read in two or three places of Holy Scripture, which I will copy here.

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."—St. James 1 : 8.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—I. St. John 2 : 15.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—St Matt. 6 : 24.

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